Sovereignty without Territory?

The Political Geographies of the Tibetan Government-in-exile

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The work presented in this thesis is the candidate's own.

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Abstract

Based on ethnographic research on exiled Tibetan political institutions and practices in India, this thesis investigates sovereignty in exile. The Tibetan Government-in-exile (TGiE), based in India since 1960, remains internationally unrecognised, has limited judicial powers and lacks *de jure* sovereignty over territory in both Tibet and in exile. However, this exiled administration claims legitimacy as the official representative of the Tibetan population, attempts to make its voice heard within the international community and performs a number of state-like functions in relation to its diasporic 'citizenry'. Given that conventional political theory is premised on the territorially-bounded sovereign nation-state as a container for political activity, and governments are legitimated according to the territory over which they hold authority, this is an exceptional case of a government which appears to refute these orthodox assumptions. As such, this study of the form, functioning and limitations of TGiE and of its existence and state-like operations within another sovereign state, raises important theoretical issues which speak directly to political geography's concerns with power and space. These include the nature of sovereignty, the extent to which sovereignty can be disentangled from jurisdiction over territory, and the role of 'the exception' in geopolitical discourses. Employing multi-sited ethnographic methodologies, the broad aims of this research are to investigate what kind of political entity the TGiE is, and to examine the nature of the sovereignty it articulates. To do so, attention is paid to Tibetan settlements in exile as sites of sovereignty, TGiE's construction of a Tibetan 'population' in exile and its management of livelihoods, the negotiation of exilic political identities, and the strategic spatialities of TGiE's election systems. Rejecting realist arguments that polities such as TGiE should be viewed merely as discrepant forms of political practice, it is argued that if sovereignty is understood as historically contingent and socially constructed – and the state, sovereignty, and territory thereby conceptually disentangled – this opens up the theoretical possibility of territorial-*less* sovereign polities.

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Figures and Tables

[all photographs are the author's unless otherwise attributed]

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Glossary and abbreviations

Glossary of Tibetan terms

Phoenetic spellings of Tibetan terms vary considerably and transliteration based on the Wylie (1959) system, whilst popular within Tibetan studies, can be unwieldy for those unfamiliar with it. To make Tibetan terms readable I have used a phonetic transliteration of Tibetan terms based loosely on Kapstein (2006). The following is primarily for translation purposes and the possible problematic fixing of meaning of such terms is noted.

Amdo	Province in North-East Tibet. Also known as Domed
Bön	Oldest spiritual tradition of Tibet. Pre-dates Buddhism
Chatrel	Voluntary contribution made to TGiE by exile Tibetans
Chenresdzig	Protector deity of Tibet
Chitue	Member of the Tibetan Parliament
Chorten	Tibetan Buddhist structure
Chöyon	Religious patron-priest relationship
Chuba	Traditional Tibetan robe
Gangchen Kyishong	'Happy Valley of Snow': the site of TGiE headquarters in Dharamsala
Gyabon	'Leader of 100' or camp leader
Inji	Slang for foreigner or, specifically, Westerner
Kalon	Government Minister
Kalon Tripa	Chief Minister, equivalent to Prime Minister
Kashag	Cabinet
Kham	Province in Eastern Tibet. Also known as Dotoe
Kora	Circumambulation of a temple or holy structure
Kyab cholwa	Refugee
Men-tse-khang	Tibetan medicine clinic
Mi-ser	Agricultural tenant or serf
Nga-wang	Political subject
Phayul	Fatherland
Rangzen	Independence or freedom
Rangzen Lagteb	Freedom book or 'Green Book' issued by TGiE to exile Tibetans
Remey	Usually translated as 'secular' but more accurately means that the state will not discriminate among different religions, rather than the absence of religion
Rogs ram	Sponsorship of Tibetans by foreigners
Shi chaya	To settle
Tsongdu	National Assembly in pre-1959 Tibet
Tsogka Choksum	'13 Settlements' movement
Ü-Tsang	Traditional province in Central Tibet
Yul-mi	Local inhabitant

Glossary of Indian terms

Ahimsa	The avoidance of violence
Benami	Informal property or land arrangement
Chai	Tea
Idli sambar	South Indian snack of fermented steamed rice pancakes with spicy lentil stew
Kannada	Dravidian language spoken in the state of Karnataka
Karom	Board game played widely in South Asia
Lok Sabha	Lower House of the Parliament of India
Panchayat	Village council
Puja	Devotional acts
Rajya Sabha	Upper House of the Parliament of India
Satyagraha	Literally 'insistence on truth': Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy and practice of non-violence

Abbreviations:

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CRO	Chief Representative Office
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration
CTRC	Central Tibetan Relief Committee
DIIR	Department of Information and International Relations
FRO	Foreigners' Registration Office
GoI	Government of India
HRLN	Human Rights Law Network (based in Delhi)
IC	Indian Identification Certificate for Tibetans
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IR	International Relations
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India)
NDPT	National Democratic Party of Tibet
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORI	No Objection to Return to India (stamp placed on IC)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PLA	People's Liberation Army (of the People's Republic of China)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PRC	People's Republic of China
RC	Indian Registration Certificate for Tibetans
TCC	Tibetan Chamber of Commerce
TCHRD	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
TCV	Tibetan Childrens' Village
TDS	Tibetan Demographic Survey

TGiE	Tibetan Government-in-Exile
TPiE	Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile
TPPRC	Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre
TSG	Tibet Support Group
TWA	Tibetan Women's Association
TYC	Tibetan Youth Congress
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SC	Scheduled Caste
SEP	Special Entry Permits for persons of Tibetan origin
SFT	Students for a Free Tibet
SP	Superintendent of Police
ST	Scheduled Tribe
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Chapter 1
Introduction: The Political Geographies of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

Clinging to the mountainside, mid-way between the bustling Indian town of Dharamsala and the former British hill-station of McLeod Ganj, is a cluster of low buildings – the headquarters of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE). Turning off the road you pass under an elaborate painted archway proclaiming the entrance to 'Gangchen Kyishong Central Tibetan Administration'. On the right are steps down to an impressive building housing the 'Department of Information and International Relations', its name written in both English and Tibetan beneath the snow-lion emblazoned crest of the TGiE. Ahead is the staff mess which serves up daily meals of Tibetan noodles and steamed bread – cooked by local Indians – and the tiny grocery shop run by Tibetans but stocked with the Indian brand confectionary, and where Indian rupees are the only currency in use.

A bell rings and an assortment of Tibetan men, women and monks, all in traditional dress, drift out of a two-storey building. A Tibetan flag flies above the porch and a sign reads 'Parliament-in-Exile of Tibet'. They mingle on the veranda, sipping tea, flicking through budget reports and catching up on political gossip. Meanwhile, a small gaggle of younger Tibetans armed with cameras and reporters' notebooks huddle in one corner of the courtyard, their TGiE-issued 'PRESS' badges in prominent view. The second bell sends the Members of Parliament scurrying back to their seats, where the newly installed cable TV camera is trained on them, broadcasting their every word live into Tibetan homes in McLeod Ganj.

Entering the Department of Home, you notice the building is weathered and worn. A far cry from a temporary refugee set-up, the mildewed walls and peeling layers of paint are evidence of decades of summer deluges and attempted repairs. The office of the Additional Secretary is typical of TGiE offices throughout this land – from Cooperative Offices in Ladakh to Settlement Offices in the jungles of Karnataka or the Tibetan Bureau in Delhi. There's the photo of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a map of Tibet and one of India, a panorama photograph of Lhasa and a promotional calendar from a local Indian printer hopeful for a renewed contract. The talk in the Department of Home is of infrastructure problems in Arunachal Pradesh, agricultural yields in Orissa and eviction notices in Delhi. Next door, the Department of Security is screening applications for 'Indian Registration Certificates for Tibetans,' with batches of forms ready to be dispatched to the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs. At the Department of Education they are rolling out the new 'Tibetan Education Policy' and across the courtyard the Department of Health is concerned with rising tuberculosis cases and the recruitment of Tibetan doctors. Things are more upbeat in the Department of Finance. The government budget is in surplus for the first time, and the voluntary taxation contributions are on the rise. Meanwhile, staff on the ground floor are processing applications for *Rangzen Lagteb*, the exile Tibetan 'passport' which every 'bona fide Tibetan' must hold, but which neither permits the holder to travel, nor offers any legal security.[1]

[1] Whilst not taken directly from field-notes, these observations are based on my fieldwork in Tibetan settlements in India in 2006–2007.

Conventional political theory is premised on the territorially-bounded sovereign nation-state as a container for political activity (Weber 1948; Giddens 1985; Taylor 1994), and governments are legitimated according to the territory over which they hold authority. This study of sovereignty in exile focuses on a case which appears to refute these orthodox assumptions. As indicated by the short vignette above, the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) is a polity ridden with contradictions.[2] It has state-like functions and attributes, but is not a recognised state. It claims authority and legitimacy vis-à-vis its exile population, but operates within the sovereign territory of India. In seeking to explore the form, functioning and limitations of the TGiE, this study raises important theoretical issues which speak directly to political geography's concerns with power and space (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Painter 1995; Taylor and Flint 2000). These include the nature of sovereignty and statehood, the extent to which sovereignty can be disentangled from jurisdiction over territory, and the role of 'the exception' in geopolitical discourses.

1.1 Between statehood and statelessness: the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

In 1949 China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Tibet and declared its 'peaceful liberation'.[3] Ten years later, the PLA crushed the Tibetan national uprising in the capital Lhasa and the Dalai Lama and some 80,000 Tibetans crossed the Himalayas to seek refuge in India, Nepal and Bhutan. Today, the Tibetan diaspora numbers approximately 122,000, with 70% residing in India (Planning Council 2000). After unsuccessful accommodation in transit camps and road construction sites across the Indian Himalayas, the Government of India (GoI) initiated a strategy of creating self-contained agricultural settlements throughout India; a deliberately non-assimilative policy in line with the Dalai Lama's wishes (Office of The Dalai Lama 1969).

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[2] Whilst the exiled government officially uses the title 'Central Tibetan Administration' when dealing with other governments, within the Tibetan community both in exile and in Tibet the administration is known as the 'Tibetan Government-in-Exile'. In light of this and the arguments made in this research, the latter term is used throughout this study. The political significance of this and other semantic choices made by the TGiE is discussed in Chapter 9.

[3] As explored in Chapter 3, controversy surrounds the legal, territorial and political status of Tibet. Chinese authorities maintain that Tibet has been and remains an inalienable part of China's territory (Wei 1989) whilst Tibetans and a number of Western lawyers (e.g. International Commission of Jurists 1960; McCorquodale and Orosz 1994) contend that Tibet existed as an independent state prior to the Chinese occupation in 1949.

On 29 April 1960 the Dalai Lama re-established the Tibetan Government in the North Indian hill-station of Dharamsala, with the twin task of restoring freedom in Tibet and rehabilitating the Tibetan refugees. Over the following decades the exiled Tibetan community, under the leadership of the Dalai Lama and more recently the democratically elected Tibetan Prime Minister (*Kalon Tripa*), has developed, expanded and institutionalised the TGiE; an exilic political structure that is widely regarded as one of the most established and well organised in the world (Goldstein 1978; Fürer-Haimendorf 1990). A series of changes have been implemented to reorganise the TGiE according to democratic principles and, following reforms in 1991, the government has developed a participatory democracy for the first time in Tibet's history. Today, operating under the constitution-like 'Charter of Tibetans in Exile', TGiE consists of a legislative parliament with members elected from the diaspora, a judiciary (albeit with limited powers) and an executive body (the *Kashag*) in charge of seven governmental departments.

Whilst less functionally operational than a territorial nation-state, the Tibetan community-in-exile is more politically organised and established than a socially-networked diaspora. Not only has the exiled community transplanted its government structures and institutionalised and democratised them, but it has established a state-*like* polity in exile. These state-like functions include the organisation of democratic elections, the provision of health services and a comprehensive education system for Tibetans living in India and Nepal, a 'voluntary' taxation system for the entire diaspora, the issuing of Tibetan 'passports' and the establishment of quasi 'embassies' in a number of states. Furthermore, the fact that TGiE represents over 120,000 Tibetans living in exile, that it perceives itself as the de jure representative of Tibetans living in Tibet, and that it is increasingly acknowledged by the international community, implies that this political administration has considerable authority and (internal) legitimacy. However, as TGiE remains internationally unrecognised and lacks sovereignty over territory in both Tibet and in exile, this polity faces significant barriers to fulfilling the conventional remit of statehood. It has limited juridical powers, restricted economic decision-making, no police or military and is unable to legally defend its 'citizens'.

As such, TGiE is characterised by a series of tensions between opposing aspects of statehood and statelessness. For example, TGiE has state-like qualities, yet is

territory-less; it is a polity which is intended to be temporary but is becoming increasingly settled; it engages with simultaneous processes of de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation; and it combines nationalism (the assertion of belonging to a place and community) with exile (the removal from and absence of such a community). Analysing these contradictions means going beyond issues of identity and nationalism (Klieger 1992; Yeh 2007), cultural preservation (Harris 1997; Korom 1997) and socio-cultural adaptation (Subba 1990; Norbu 2001) through which the exile Tibetan case has been viewed to date, to examine the political institutions and practices of TGiE and its relationship with the host state India. Doing so opens up a conceptual space through which to interrogate key political concepts such as the nature of the state, questions of sovereignty and the role of territory.

1.2 Objectives of the study

This study aims to analyse the political relationships TGiE has established in terms of conventional and critical understandings of political authority and the organisation of political space. Based on multi-sited ethnographic research conducted with the exiled Tibetan government and community based in India, the broad aims of this research are:

(i) to examine the nature of sovereignty articulated by this territory-less polity;
(ii) to investigate what kind of political entity the TGiE is.

Turning to the first aim, in an international political environment dominated by state intervention, extra-territorial sites of detention and security concerns regarding insurgent movements and failed states (Agnew 2005; Elden 2006), sovereignty is an increasingly important and contested issue debated in political geography, international relations and political anthropology (Ashley 1988; Weber 1995; Krasner 1999; Sidaway 2002; Hansen and Stepputat 2005). In light of this, a focus on a positive story of nascent democracy and community cohesion operating within the global South is expedient and pertinent. In teasing apart TGiE's articulations of sovereignty in exile, the following questions will be asked: Without the coercive powers of sovereign statehood and a monopoly over the use of violence, how does TGiE enforce loyalty and exercise authority, and what limitations does it face? Given its lack of legal recognition as a government, what forms of legitimacy

can this type of political entity draw upon? To what extent is territory a limiting factor for TGiE's articulation of political power, and what spatial politics does it produce? How does TGiE negotiate its governance strategies whilst operating within the sovereign state of India? Overall, through locating and examining the key moments, sites, relations, practices, discourses and materialities through which TGiE is constituted, I critically analyse the modalities of sovereignty 'at work' in this case, the nature of the relationship between sovereignty and territory and possible frameworks for shared sovereignty.

With regards to exploring what type of polity TGiE is and aspires to be, this study will explore both the ways in which TGiE is unique and how it partially fits a Western-centric model of the sovereign state. In the following chapters, I will investigate TGiE's state-like functions and limitations, examine how this administration combines and daily negotiates aspects of statehood and statelessness and outline the extent to which nationalism and a state-citizen relationship is being actively negotiated between TGiE and Tibetans in exile. Such queries will facilitate the exploration of a series of broader questions which tap into key contemporary debates within and beyond political geography. These include: what constitutes a state and is territory an essential pre-requisite to statehood? To what extent is governmentality is a state or non-state practice and how central is territory to governing practices? Can multiple legal and political identities be held simultaneously and what does this say about the state-citizen relationship more generally? How is the binary of refugeehood and citizenship constructed and subverted? What can the existence and functioning of polities such as TGiE offer existing models of autonomy and transnational governance, and what they can tell us about the future (re)configuration of political space and authority?

My primary focus in this thesis is on TGiE as an entity in its own right, examining the political structures established by this exiled administration in order to address issues of governance, legitimacy, political representation, identity construction and welfare provision. Cross-cutting these themes are a series of relationships which TGiE has established and daily negotiates over a range of scales. First is the relationship between TGiE and 'its' population in exile which raises key questions of citizenship without territory, legitimacy without coercive powers, nationalism in exile and dispersed democracy. Important to note is the fact that while the international diaspora and TGiE's operations within Nepal form an important backdrop to this study, the primary focus is on the exile community in

India. Secondly, the relationship between TGiE and its host state India will be an important and recurrent theme. Central to grasping what TGiE is and what it can do, relations with the host state are especially pertinent in terms of where the boundaries of sovereign power and legitimacy lie, how these are enforced and, therefore, the degree of the exile administration's autonomy within the domestic arena of the host. Moreover, an analysis of how two sovereignties, albeit one unrecognised, can co-exist in the same territory and how this relationship is (re)negotiated as TGiE becomes increasingly institutionalised, is instructive to ongoing debates on multiple and overlapping sovereignties and the nature of sovereignty more generally. Finally, the relationship between TGiE and the international community of states will form an important historical and legal context for this study, enabling a focus on issues of external legitimacy, (non)recognition and the performances and practices of (para)diplomacy.

In order to unpack and explore these relationships, the dual dimensions of elite and popular politics will be examined. This brings together the official 'top-down' view with the perspective from the bottom-up; what it means to live under the TGiE, the restrictions faced and the nature of everyday interactions with this exile polity. The use of multi-sited ethnographic methods is crucial to such an approach, enabling TGiE's self-representation to be distinguished from and contrasted with the view of Tibetans 'on the ground' in exile communities in India. This contributes to a growing body of ethnographic work in political geography and critical geopolitics (e.g. Secor 2001a; Mountz 2003; Megoran 2006). In addition to being original in its focus on multiple Tibetan settlements, this study is innovative in its ethnographic examination of the everyday functioning of TGiE in India and, in particular, how the relationship between the exile administration and the GoI is constructed through mundane interactions at a range of scales.

1.3 Unpacking the political geographies of the TGiE

Having set out here the broad context and research aims of this study, the next chapter will contextualise TGiE vis-à-vis other geopolitical anomalies and will situate this study within and between literatures on states and on statelessness. By positioning this research within a theoretical trajectory from statist approaches based on realism and positivism to non-statist approaches based on critical and poststructuralist theories, my aim is to consider how this case might be viewed

from various perspectives, how this enables us to understand and theorise this polity and, in turn, what such an empirical focus can lend to broader theorisations of sovereignty, territory, the state, diaspora and transnationalism. With the case having been made in Chapter 2 for a focus on TGiE as a case study, Chapter 3 will set out the historical and geopolitical context of this exile administration. This will entail sketching out the complex legal and political status of the territory of Tibet, relations between Tibet, China and India and providing an overview of the history and development of TGiE and wider Tibetan diaspora.

Chapter 4 then sets out the methodologies employed in this study in light of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. Turning first to qualitative methods, this chapter describes the in-depth interviews and focus groups undertaken with TGiE and Indian officials and a cross-section of exile Tibetans in six Tibetan settlements across India during three research trips in 2006–2007. Focusing on the quotidian geographies of this non-state polity, ethnographic approaches to the everyday state are also outlined, including attention paid to the mundane actions, objects and people which constitute the administrative milieu of the TGiE (Thrift 2000; Painter 2006). Finally, issues of researcher positionality and the advantages and limitations of my involvement in Tibet activism are discussed.

Drawing on this ethnographic research and working with and across the relationships and scales set out above, Chapters 5 to 8 explore and analyse four key aspects of TGiE's state-like functioning in exile: the Tibetan settlements in exile as sites of sovereignty; TGiE's construction of a Tibetan 'population' in exile and its governance of lives and livelihoods; the negotiation of exilic political identities based on refugeehood and citizenship; and the development of exile Tibetan democracy and parliamentary elections. Drawing on a range of theoretical approaches, each of these substantive chapters highlights key aspects of TGiE's articulation of sovereignty and, together, they build up a picture of the form, functioning and limitations of this polity.

Chapter 5 focuses on the key issue of territory and addresses the apparent paradox of a stateless nation managing a series of territorialised settlements. In unpacking the spatiality of the Tibetan government and community in exile attention is turned to three distinct geographies: diasporic networks; the TGiE's territorialised administrative hierarchies; and the Tibetanised landscapes of the 35 TGiE-run settlements in India. As spaces where TGiE has autonomy over its own affairs and

partial de facto sovereignty, the establishment, sustainability and day-to-day administration of these settlements is key to understanding the underlying rationale of TGiE, issues of nationalism, homeland and displacement, and the operation of Tibetan and Indian legal systems within the same territory. As such, this chapter examines the role, function and management of these settlements from the internal perspective of the Tibetan 'state'-in-exile, and considers settlements as key sites of interaction between the Tibetan and Indian Governments. Situating these issues in relation to theories of (de)territorialisation, Tibetan spatiality in exile is interpreted as lying between state space and diaspora space and the idea of these settlements as sites of 'displaced sovereignty' is posited.

In light of the territorial and legal limitations of TGiE outlined in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 employs a different theoretical perspective on political power in order to further examine the form and functioning of this exile administration. Drawing on the extra-territorial and non-state centric form of power found in Foucault's notions of governmentality and biopower, this chapter focuses critical attention on TGiE's management of lives and livelihoods. Not only does governmentality open up the possibility of polities other than states governing, but it also allows for entities other than territory to be what is governed. As such, this chapter examines the intersection of the case of TGiE with ongoing debates regarding the relationship between governmentality and the state, and governance and territory. In doing so, TGiE's construction of three objects of governance is examined – population, civil society and the economy – in relation to which TGiE creates itself as a 'state'. Not only does this shift attention to the importance of non-Western cultural politics vis-à-vis governmentality and empirically grounds these often abstract ideas, but it speaks to broader concerns regarding issues of welfare, the fostering of nascent economies and the development of civil society.

Turning to the relationship individual Tibetans have with their government, Chapter 7 focuses on the construction and negotiation of political and legal identities in exile. At the heart of the relationship between identity and the state is the construction of a binary between the citizen resident in a bounded territorial and national community, and its archetypal 'other', the refugee. As simultaneously refugees in the eyes of the Indian state and international community (although India's lack of refugee legislation complicates this picture in important ways) and Tibetan 'citizens' in the eyes of TGiE, exile Tibetans fundamentally challenge this dualism. Turning a critical spotlight onto this legal limbo, this chapter examines

these contradictory relationships between Tibetans in India and each of the two 'states' which identify, label and document them. Drawing on and speaking to a growing body of sociological and anthropological literature on identity documents, this chapter shows how individual Tibetans are both victims and agents of these identification regimes, and how TGiE strives to claim legitimacy through constructing state/citizen-like relations. This chapter therefore exposes the politics of identity labelling and encourages a productive engagement with and dialogue between research agendas around refugeehood and citizenship, statehood and statelessness.

In the final substantive chapter, attention turns to an aspect of TGiE which brings together the key themes of territoriality, governance and political identities: the establishment of democracy in exile and the organisation of Tibetan parliamentary elections. With the democratisation of Tibetan politics perceived as a key achievement of this exile polity and central to how it presents itself to the international community, this examination of the development of Tibetan democracy and its material manifestation in the parliamentary election system provides an important insight into both the raison d'être of TGiE, and into what a territory-less polity can contribute to existing theories of democracy. As such, Chapter 8 examines the unique evolution of and rationale behind Tibetan democracy and the limitations faced by operating in exile and asks the question: if elections are conventionally based on political representatives representing voters in territorially defined constituencies, what happens in parliamentary elections in a 'state' without sovereignty over territory? In response, this chapter teases apart the instrumental and strategic roles of democracy and analyses the relationship between political representation and territory – both 'real' and symbolic.

Finally, Chapter 9 returns to the initial research aims in light of this ethnographic study and outlines the implications of this research for understandings of sovereignty and thinking about alternative geopolitical configurations. Interrogating and problematising the constituent elements of TGiE's sovereignty, issues of legitimacy and legality and concepts of de facto and de jure sovereignty are disaggregated and the idea of displaced sovereignty proposed whereby there is a dislocation between the source and enactment of sovereign authority. With regards to the ambiguous and often contradictory relationship between TGiE and GoI the notion of tacit sovereignty which is assumed through everyday practices and implicit understandings is posited. Turning to what kind of polity this is, the

state-like nature of TGiE is assessed, its position between statehood and statelessness explored and the utility of categorising geopolitical anomalies questioned. The thesis ends by broadening the focus to explore the extent to which this polity can offer a framework for other stateless nations, indigenous communities and refugee groups and to outline what the existence and functioning of non-state polities such as TGiE mean for the (re)pluralising of political space and constructing more progressive geopolitical futures.

Chapter 2
Theorising Governments-in-Exile: Statehood, Statelessness and the Reconfiguration of Territory and Sovereignty

2.1 Introduction

In light of the research aims set out in the previous chapter – to examine the nature of sovereignty articulated in this case and to investigate what kind of polity the TGiE is – the obvious place to theoretically situate this study is within the sub-discipline of political geography with its focus on the relationship between power and space. My aim in this chapter is to address three questions: Why should political geographers pay attention to polities such as governments-in-exile? How might we go about understanding and theorising such entities? And how would a critical analysis of governments-in-exile within political geography productively encourage us to rethink disciplinary boundaries, analytical approaches and research agendas?

In attending to the former, I will contextualise governments-in-exile with regards to the emergence of a range of geopolitical 'anomalies' in the twentieth-century. These geopolitical 'exceptions' will be discussed in relation to their articulation of sovereignty, territory and statehood, with the category of governments-in-exile emerging as the most apposite for interrogating the phenomenon of sovereignty without territory. The genealogy and common characteristics of governments-in-exile will then be sketched out and this category unpacked historically, geographically and analytically. Attention then shifts to how a polity such as TGiE can be theorised. Given my focus on its state-like functioning in exile, I will situate this case within the epistemological manoeuvres that have occurred within the study of the state, sovereignty and territory, drawing on literature from political geography and (critical) international relations (IR). Rejecting realist arguments that polities such as TGiE should be viewed merely as discrepant forms of political practice, I will argue that if sovereignty is understood as historically contingent and socially constructed – and the state, sovereignty and territory thereby conceptually disentangled – this opens up the theoretical possibility of territory-*less* polities and allows us to explore the governmental functions that TGiE employs, and the degree of de facto sovereignty that it exercises. However, in acknowledging that theories of the state fail to address key issues faced by TGiE and its exile population – including refugee status, relations with the host state

and temporariness in exile – attention then turns to theories of statelessness. Focusing on refugee studies and literature on diaspora and transnationalism, three key points of intersection between these research agendas and the case of TGiE will be analysed: the role of the state vis-à-vis the stateless; reconceptualisations of territory and the role of the homeland; and the construction of political identities in exile. By situating this case theoretically and empirically within and between these literatures on the state and on statelessness, I make the case for thinking productively across research fields, focusing on relational and processual rather than categorical frames of analysis and thinking critically about a political geography of statelessness.

2.2 Geopolitical anomalies, governments-in-exile and the 'norms' of international politics

Contemporary geopolitical anomalies are non-state entities which in diverse ways challenge, disrupt or reconfigure the relationship between sovereignty and territory. My focus here is on examples which exist, or aspire to exist, *within* the state system, and therefore not on multi-national companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or transnational social movements.[4] Whilst also fundamentally challenging conventional interpretations of sovereignty and territory, these latter entities have logics and motives which significantly diverge from those of the interstate system. After setting out the issues regarding sovereignty and statehood that such anomalies raise I turn attention to governments-in-exile, outlining how these polities have been classified, the diversity of forms within this category and the important theoretical questions a case such as TGiE raises.

2.2.1 Contextualising geopolitical 'anomalies'

Concomitant with the dramatic increase in the number of nation-states since the end of World War II – from 51 members of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 to 192 at present (www.un.org/members/list.shtml)[5] – has been another story: the formation of political entities which do not fit the nation-state model. Diverse in size and rationale (whether or not they are aspiring to independent statehood), such polities are often the product of the same geopolitical processes – decolonisation and secession – and principles of international law – self-

[4] Having said this, the relationship between TGiE and the label 'NGO' will be discussed in Chapter 6.
[5] The UN is perceived as the prime arbiter among legitimation and recognition issues whereby admission as a member state has come to be regarded as axiomatic with statehood (Dugard 1987).

determination and territorial integrity – which have led to this proliferation of nation-states. Crucially, however, these political entities are often the ad hoc manifestation of 'failures' or incompletion of these processes, or the institutional outcome of tensions between these legal principles and prevailing international norms. These include 'the notion of equal sovereignty of states, internal competence for domestic jurisdiction, and territorial preservation of existing boundaries' (Elden 2006: 11).

The decolonisation of territories forming part of European overseas empires altered the complexion of the international system in the period from 1945 to 1960 (Bartmann 2004). At the core of the decolonisation process, and central to the activities of the newly formed UN, was the principle – and right – of self-determination (Castellino 1999; UN Charter, Article 1).[6] Alongside the formation of nation-states from former colonies, other territorial entities emerged which were framed as the result of partial or suspended decolonisation. These included League of Nation Mandates which later became UN Trust Territories (see Anghie 2002), Non Self-Governing Territories[7] and the broader category of dependent territories (Armstrong and Read 2000). Whilst colonial territories had always posed a problem to conventional concepts of sovereignty, these polities resulting from a stalling of the process of decolonisation further complicated and challenged the relationship between sovereignty and international law (Anghie 2002). For example, a recurrent (and indeed rarely resolved) issue in these cases is determining where the sovereignty over these territories was vested. Was it in the former colonial power? In the institutions of the international community (League of Nations or later the UN)? Or with the community itself in the form of 'latent sovereignty' that would emerge in its actualised form upon the termination of the mandate (Elden 2006: 19)?

Moreover, as forms of incomplete and divided sovereignty, these forgotten vestiges of empire have an often ambiguous temporality. On the one hand they are conventionally perceived as a stage en route to complete independence or

[6] The UN actions on decolonisation meant that self-determination applied only to former colonies, not to independent countries. For the latter, territorial integrity overrides other possible claims by groups of people (Elden 2006: 12).

[7] This label describes peoples who, as a consequence of colonialism, are not able to immediately exercise fully their right to self-determination. In 1960, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1514 (XV), promulgating the 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples', which declared that all remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs) and Trust Territories were entitled to self-determination and independence. However, 16 territories remain on the UN's NSGT list, including Western Sahara, the Falkland Islands, Guam and Gibraltar.

assimilation into an existing nation-state. However, in reality they are often stuck in limbo: 'complex mixtures of formal dependence, internal self-government, and international personality' (Strang 1996: 24).[8] Finally, it should be noted that often neglected from literatures on such geopolitical anomalies are national liberation movements which are directed against the occupying powers of 'third world' states and which are the visible outcomes of the continuation of colonialism in the postcolonial period. With colonial rule conventionally interpreted to refer only to white Europeans, the international community and the writings and practices of realist IR have struggled to recognise and intervene in cases where colonialism took place after the establishment of the UN charter in 1945, and where the coloniser is not a European or 'first world' state (Castellino 1999: 526). The case of Tibet is illustrative, as the international community was faced with a new colonisation with China's occupation of Tibet in 1949–1950, but failed to frame this case as one of colonisation and subsequently has not recognised Tibet as a decolonisation issue (see Chapter 3).

A second category are 'shared sovereignties'; geopolitical anomalies which are the result of extraterritoriality, where 'the jurisdiction and laws of one sovereign state extend over the territory of another' (Griffiths and O'Callaghan 2002: 103). These include binational territories and condominiums (e.g. Brčko district of Bosnia and Herzegovina, see Jeffrey 2006), international territories such as Antarctica (Dodds 1997) and international oceans (Steinberg 2001), 'trans-state entities' (e.g. the Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore Growth Triangle, see Relyea 1998), enclaves (Vinokurov 2007) and leased territories (Strauss 2007). These shared sovereignties illustrate a range of complex and constantly negotiated legal arrangements, produced as the interstate system attempts to regularise its 'awkward spaces' and historical irregularities. Critical examinations of these entities therefore disrupt traditional understandings of sovereignty and open up the possibilities for overlapping, shared and constantly negotiated sovereignties (see Ong 1999; Grundy-Warr and Wong 2002).

Finally, there is the eclectic range of polities which have emerged as a result of the post-Cold War tension between increasing nationalist bids for secession, and the unwillingness of the international system to approve secessionist wishes when

[8] It should be noted that, in the case of contemporary dependencies, this in-between status is often supported in these territories, as the balance between autonomy and external protection can be advantageous for what are predominantly small or sparsely populated territories.

their claims for self-determination are 'pitted against the equally sacrosanct principle of territorial integrity' (Bahcheli *et al* 2004: 7).[9] These polities include national liberation or insurgent movements such as the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) (Byman 2001); stateless nations such as Catalonia and Kurdistan (Guibernau 1999); and de facto states (Pegg 1998; Kingston and Spears 2004).

As perhaps the most 'state-like' of these 'less-than-state' entities, de facto states such as Somaliland (Kaplan 2008), Abkhazia (Walker 2007), and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Navaro-Yashin 2005) are fascinating cases of reconfigured sovereignty and the unintended by-product of changing international norms concerning the criteria for statehood and the relationship between legality and legitimacy. In traditional international law, recognition was ostensibly a legal act and was acquired only after successfully demonstrating the capacity to govern (Murphy 1999). Statehood was thus premised on empirical criteria and the 'doctrine of effective control' (see Weber's (1948) definition of the state and the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, 1933). However, as the twentieth-century progressed it became increasingly apparent that many states fall short of these criteria. As a result, the international community has increasingly come to accept a juridical approach to statehood which includes a former colony's right to self-determination (Spears 2004). As such, 'rulers can acquire independence solely by virtue of being successors of colonial governments' (Jackson 1990: 34). This 'new sovereignty game' (*ibid*) thus led to the establishment of a number of quasi states which are 'internationally recognised as full juridical equals... yet which manifestly lack all but the most rudimentary empirical capabilities' (Pegg 1998: 3).[10] De facto states are therefore the flip side of these quasi states; having state capabilities but lacking recognition (Mihalkanin 2004). Granting legal recognition to states which are in a state of domestic collapse on the one hand while more viable de facto states remain legally unrecognised therefore exposes the 'egregious double standards' of the contemporary international system (Bartmann 2004: 13) and demonstrates the importance international society continues to place on territoriality and the sanctity of recognised borders (Pegg 2004).

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[9] As Pegg points out, although secession and decolonisation are based on the same principle of self-determination, the international community has embraced the latter but there has been a traditional bias against the former, based on the fear of never-ending secession and 'Balkanisation' (1998: 193).

[10] Jackson (1990) describes this as quasi states possessing 'negative sovereignty' but lacking 'positive sovereignty'. The colonial binary logic underpinning such literature on quasi states and de facto states is discussed later in this chapter.

Returning to the tension between secessionist demands for independent statehood and opposition from established nation-states that see it as a challenge to the 'international order' (Guibernau 1999: 27), three possible routes for resolving this can be identified. Firstly, a territorial approach granting independent statehood has resulted in the creation of new microstates. As entities at the margins of the international community, microstates such as San Marino, Liechtenstein and Andorra in Europe and Niue, Kiribati and Nauru in the Pacific can be used to interrogate the minimum criteria of statehood as they represent 'border cases of independence' (Duursma 1996: 423).[11] An alternative approach, and in line with prevailing international norms of preserving territorial integrity, is to keep existing (multi-ethnic) nation-states intact, but to accommodate secessionist demands through consociational forms of power-sharing. Involving a near-endless array of autonomous or confederal arrangements within existing states (Pegg 1998) examples include cases of sub-state nationalism such as Scotland and Quebec (Keating 2001; Lijphart 2004) and indigenous communities in North America (Bruyneel 2007). Such judicial 'solutions' of plurinational accommodation therefore 'provide new ways of coping with the present, post-sovereign order' (Keating 2001: ix) and raise important questions regarding the nature and limits of autonomy and its relationships with self-determination and sovereignty. A third option, and one which I will return to in Chapter 9, entails the continued existence of non-state entities in their current form, but with significant shifts in the interpretation and implementation of international norms so that these polities are accommodated within a heterogeneous inter*national* system. This decidedly more utopian solution might also take inspiration from Gottlieb's (1993) states-plus-nations model whereby national homelands would overlap with existing states in a multi-tiered system of sovereignty.

This brief overview of the shifting political and legal contexts for, and key characteristics of, a range of geopolitical anomalies has touched on a range of varying degrees of sovereignty. These include shared, multiple and overlapping sovereignties, would-be sovereignties and sovereign nations (rather than sovereign states). Importantly, these are all entities which, in the contemporary international

[11] Not to be confused with micro-states are so-called 'micro-nations' or virtual states. These eccentric and often ephemeral self-proclaimed 'states' are weak simulations of states, typically involving a small group of people (most claim a membership of less than 50) and lacking both international recognition and any basis in international law. Examples include the Principality of Sealand, a World War II anti-aircraft platform 10km off the Suffolk coast founded in 1967 and the Republic of Minerva established between Tonga and Fiji in 1972.

system, are seen to lack key attributes of statehood: legal sovereignty, international legitimacy and recognition. As such, they are entities which have international status short of sovereign statehood and are key manifestations of Clapham's claim that the world is no longer

> 'crisply divided into entities which do and do not count as "states". It consists instead of a mass of power structures which, regardless of formal designation, enjoy greater or lesser degrees of statehood' (1998: 157).

In addition, though constructed as legally and politically incomplete, these are entities which actively seek to operate within the international system and their logic is similar to that of sovereign states. Their purpose is not to challenge or undermine the system, but rather to alter the boundaries of the system and thereby gain permission to play the game (Pegg 1998). Moreover, as sketched out above, these polities are the result of, and speak to, international legal discourses of self-determination, secession, minority rights, decolonisation and territorial integrity. Indeed, these cases aptly illustrate the continued persistence and inflexibility of these international norms and therefore the failure of realist IR and the international community to keep pace with changing geopolitical realities.

2.2.2 Genealogy and geopolitics of governments-in-exile

One key factor sets governments-in-exile apart from the non-state polities outlined above and makes them of particular interest to political geographers. Whilst control and authority over territory is a pre-requisite for the majority of geopolitical 'anomalies' and the populations concerned are residing in their homelands, governments-in-exile have no jurisdiction over territory and operate from within a 'foreign' sovereign state. As such, these entities are instructive to addressing the relationship between sovereignty and territory. Often lacking diplomatic recognition whilst commanding significant political authority, governments-in-exile are a relatively rare geopolitical phenomenon. Complex and highly differentiated, they are 'as varied as the countries they purport to rule', differing considerably in structure, functions and 'clout' (*The Economist*, 22 December 2001: 45).[12]

In the introductory chapter to *Governments-in-exile in Contemporary World Politics*, Shain (1991: 3–4) categorises governments-in-exile according to the goals

[12] What I am not including within the (problematic) category of 'governments-in-exile' are the 'numerous liberation organisations, national councils or committees, free movements, and other opposition groups in exile which have neither claimed or purported to be governments nor have been recognised as such' (Talmon 1998: ix). Rather, any legal entity which claims to be a government-in-exile and to represent its 'nation', or has been given the label of 'government-in-exile' by others will be considered, irrespective of whether or not they have been legally recognised as a government.

and grounds on which they appeal for international support. First are deposed governments which struggle from abroad to regain political independence or territory lost in a war. The London-based allied governments-in-exile during World War II are key examples of this, and were recognised *as* governments by most allied and neutral states (Conway and Gotovitch 2001).[13] Of these, Poland's Government in London, established in June 1940 and commanding Polish armed forces during the war, was the most extensive and enduring, remaining in existence until the end of Communist rule in Poland in 1990 when it formally passed on its responsibilities to the new government in situ (Coutouvidis and Reynolds 1986).[14] Secondly, illustrating a post-war shift from 'no longer [being] dispossessed governments trying to prolong a *de jure* international status, but rather aspiring exiled contenders seeking... *de facto* control of a given target territory' (Shain 1991: 226), are groups striving to overthrow and replace their home country's native, and often oppressive, regime. Presenting themselves as either lawfully elected or their nation's traditional representatives, examples include the Government of Cuba in Arms-in-Exile established in 1961 in Miami, the National Government of Iran in Exile (1962), and the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (1990). Thirdly, reflecting a shift from European-based governments-in-exile to exiled governments being 'almost exclusively the tool of liberation movements and other aspirants in Third World countries' (Shain 1991: 8), are those emerging due to the political instability surrounding the end of European colonialism (e.g. Gouvernement Provisoire de la Republique Algerienne established in 1958 and based in Cairo and then Tunis). Finally, there are groups aspiring to independent political status due to occupation of their homeland by a neighbouring state (e.g. the Polisario government of Western Sahara established in 1973; the Kuwaiti Government-in-Exile based in Saudi Arabia in 1990 and the TGiE).

It is important to note that few exiled administrations since 1945 – especially those established as a result of secession, political opposition or civil war – have been

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[13] These included the governments of Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece based in London and colonies of allied countries, including the Philippine Commonwealth Government-in-exile based in Washington DC and the Government of Burma based in Shimla, India. Three governments-in-exile aligned with Germany were also established; the Bulgarian National Government-in-exile, Delegation gouvernementale francais pour la defence des interets nationaux and the Serbian Government-in-exile. These entities were based in Germany or German occupied Vienna and were recognised only by Germany.

[14] Indeed, when Lech Wałęsa became the first post-Communist president of Poland, he received the symbols of the Polish Republic (the presidential and state seals and the original text of the 1935 Constitution) from the last president of the Government-in-exile, Ryszard Kaczorowski. This therefore re-established the continuity of the Republic and in effect retroactively recognised the legitimacy of the Government-in-exile (Stachura 2004: 45).

recognised, and formal declarations of non-recognition have been made in several cases (Talmon 1998). A key reason for this is the considerable weight of the principle of territorial integrity in the legal discourses through which recognition is applied for and conferred or denied. Crucially, the act of recognition creates a zero-sum-game with respect to territory as diplomatic recognition cannot be simultaneously accorded 'to more than one aspirant to govern the same territorial entity' (Shain 1991: 220). With the power dynamics of the current international system favouring territorially bounded 'conventional' nation-states, this therefore precludes the international recognition and legitimation of many governments-in-exile which challenge the authority and legitimacy of an *in situ* state. In summary, therefore, like other anomalous political entities, governments-in-exile are most likely to form during periods of domestic political upheaval and geopolitical instability and closely relate to international legal doctrines of decolonisation, secession and self-determination (Reisman 1991).

In general, governments-in-exile are a neglected feature of international politics, with their achievements under-reported and their existence under-theorised. Existing studies of exile governments 'are written either by the exiles themselves or their successors' (Goddeeris 2007: 397), or are in-depth but one-off analyses of specific cases (e.g. Palmier 2006). There have been few attempts to study governments-in-exile comparatively or to theoretically assess the implications of these entities for contemporary international society (although see Shain 1989, 1991; Talmon 1998).[15] Consistent among these latter studies has been a reliance on secondary sources, a focus on the formal politics and political elites of governments-in-exile and an emphasis on abstract concepts of international law and international diplomacy. My assertion, therefore, is that there is an important place for (critical) political geography and the employment of ethnographic methods to focus on the lived realities of governments-in-exile, examining how they function on the ground and how relationships with their 'citizens' and host states are daily negotiated. In light of this, whilst Shain's schema is useful in setting out the contexts and circumstances from which governments-in-exile develop, this

[15] Whilst calling for an imposition of theoretical order regarding the study of governments-in-exile, Shain's edited collection (1991) in many ways fails to meet this challenge, and instead is ultimately more descriptive than analytical. A more theoretically rigorous analysis is made in Shain's monograph *The Frontier of Loyalty* (1989) which, coming from a political science perspective, compares the political activities of groups of exiles (not necessarily governments-in-exile) and proposes replacing the 'impractical' concept of legitimacy with the concept of 'loyalty'. Meanwhile, Talmon's (1998) comparative study employs a legalistic frame of analysis and systematic approach to examine 70 twentieth-century governments-in-exile. Whilst illuminating in terms of its analysis of diplomatic relations and protection of property and nationals by governments-in-exile, Talmon's focus is primarily on the legal intricacies of recognition rather than the nature of governments-in-exile as entities in their own right.

categorisation tells us little about how governments-in-exile actually function or about broader issues of sovereignty, territory and statehood. In order to think of these entities in a different way, it is instructive to consider governments-in-exile as processual and, echoing Pegg's (1998) analytical framework of the birth, life and death of de facto states, we can chart a similar 'life-cycle' for governments-in-exile (Figure 2.a).

Figure 2.a: The life-cycle of Governments-in-Exile

BIRTH	LIFE	DEATH
Circumstances leading to the establishment of a government-in-exile e.g. - War/ civil war - colonial occupation - annexation - political opposition to the ruling regime - secession - decolonisation	Period in exile and the state-like functioning of the government-in-exile - International recognition - internal legitimacy and relationship with the 'dependent' refugee population - relationship with the host state	Possible outcomes for governments-in-exile, whether aspired to or not - Return to governing in the homeland - Disbanding of government-in-exile

Existing literature focuses overwhelmingly on the 'birth' and 'death' stages of this cycle. I argue instead that it is the period in-between – the 'episode entre parentheses' (Conway and Gotovitch 2001: 268) when the government exists and functions in exile – which raises key questions for political geography. These include issues of legitimacy, authority, the nature of statehood and the relationship between sovereignty and territory. Although for many governments-in-exile their 'sojourn' in exile is short-lived – with their (self)declaration a symbolic strategy to elicit international support without the intention of actually operating as a government whilst in exile – for others this period is protracted and they continue to function in exile for many decades. Examples of such governments-in-exile include the TGiE, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) established on Algerian territory in 1976 following Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara (Shelley 2004),[16] and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) which has been perhaps the most active non-state participant in international politics (Moshe

[16] The SADR was created by the Polisario Front as a tool in the independence struggle and the institutions of the SADR and Polisario are highly intertwined.

1996). More than 'simply' a political and legal technique 'to influence, undermine or replace a particular government *in situ*' (Reisman 1991: 238), these polities have an additional set of functions compared to more 'conventional' war-time governments-in-exile. These include increasingly permanent state-like structures in exile; the provision of welfare services for a sizeable dependent population; the promotion of nation-building policies; the establishment of democratic institutions; and their operation (although not jurisdiction) within defined territories in the host state.[17] These important dimensions of functioning in exile, which are notably not contingent on the polity being legally recognised, opens up questions about the nature of the *relationships* established during this period. These include relations between the government-in-exile and the population(s) they claim to represent, the government in situ, the host state and other governments.

Indeed, with regards to the latter relationships, despite the significant material, political and legal limitations faced,[18] a lack of recognition does not mean that these governments-in-exile cannot conduct interactions with other governments. Rather, as Shearer asserts, 'non-recognition... does not necessarily mean non-intercourse with non-recognising states, just as non-intercourse does not necessarily signify non-recognition' (1994: 129). A key aspect of unofficial engagements with the international community are practices of paradiplomacy. Whilst the term has to date been applied primarily to the foreign policy capacity of sub-national governments (Aldecoa and Keating 1999), it can fruitfully be extended to the diplomatic strategies through which exiled administrations seek to translate their de facto control into de jure acceptance in the international arena. Such activities and performances include the establishment of quasi-diplomatic facilities such as 'pseudo' embassies and foreign missions, engagement with international donor agencies and the issuing of passport-like identity documents. As attempts to project an image of credibility and some measure of international personality, these practices open up the question of the relationship between recognition and legitimacy and the extent to which these can be teased apart in light of such polities.

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[17] Despite the fact that 'understanding the relationship between host and guest is central to grasping what governments-in-exile are and can do' (Reisman 1991: 243), surprisingly little academic attention has focused on the relationship between a government-in-exile and its host state. The relationship is mentioned only in passing in most accounts of governments-in-exile and is spoken about in general terms, with a focus on wider geopolitical contexts and alliances.

[18] For example, without legal recognition governments-in-exile cannot enter into diplomatic relations, gain membership in intergovernmental organisations (Duursma 1996: 115) or enter into or benefit from bilateral or multilateral treaties and alliances (Mihalkanin 2004: 157).

These polities therefore constitute very particular configurations of sovereignty and territory and claims to legitimate governance. They are holders of state-potential, builders of social capital and have intriguing parallels to, but lack direct equivalence with, both the category of governments-in-exile and de facto states. With regards to the latter, whilst the TGiE and SADR have existed longer than a number of de facto and, indeed, de jure states (e.g. East Timor, Montenegro) these neither are nor strive to be states per se. Their function is not to remain in exile but rather to regain political authority in the homeland, and thus the projection of their future is fundamentally different from their present.[19] In terms of the category of governments-in-exile, if, as discussed above, cases such as TGiE and SADR are qualitatively different from previous war-time governments-in-exile and therefore an exception to this geopolitical exception, questions arise as to whether these entities can or should be classified as 'governments-in-exile.' In turn, this raises the issue of how instructive 'government-in-exile' is as a descriptor and category. Indeed, whilst a comparative study between TGiE and SADR would be enlightening,[20] the incoherence of the classification of 'government-in-exile', the scope of a PhD thesis and the adoption of an ethnographic approach meant that it is more productive to focus on one exile polity and explore its functioning in depth. In light of this, and given my previous experience working with the exile Tibetan community in India as well as language and access issues (see Chapter 4), the Tibetan case was selected. Framing TGiE in its own terms – rather than with the conceptual and historical baggage of the 'government-in-exile' category – the form, functions, relationships and limitations of the TGiE will be unpacked and analysed in the following chapters in order to explore and examine what kind of political entity it is, and what can be learnt from it.

2.2.3 Summary

I want to end this section by summarising the reasons why political geographers should focus critical attention on non-state entities, and governments-in-exile in particular. Despite their limited numbers, relatively small populations and territorial size and often lack of substantive economic power, these anomalies can provide an invaluable window on the nature and reality of international legal processes, being able to 'rip through modernity's dominant spatial story and

[19] Both governments-in-exile have formulated detailed plans and constitutions for the future of their homelands and these, along with the transfer of institutions and staff from exile, are perceived to facilitate a smooth transition of power if or when the occupying regime is overthrown.

[20] SADR bears striking resemblances to TGiE in terms of its historical circumstances (both homelands were occupied by neighbouring states), the lack of effective international action despite UN recognition of their right to self-determination, the establishment of functioning democratic exile governments which have the dual purpose of providing for dependent refugee populations and continuing the 'freedom struggle'.

elucidate the limits of an International Relations discourse' (Soguk and Whitehall 1999: 681). In addition to opening up questions regarding future trends within international society and theoretical issues pertaining to how international law can adapt to the presence of such non-juridical entities, these entities have a pivotal place in current international politics and a measurable impact on issues of conflict and war (Pegg 1998). Therefore, as lived realities of these (re)configurations of political space and power, these polities are worthy of a 'more balanced and less judgemental treatment than they have often received in the past' (*ibid*: 251). Finally, with an ambiguous relationship to statehood, an empirical focus on polities such as TGiE can throw into relief and problematise the nature of sovereignty, territory and statehood, and the relationships between these core concepts of political geography.

2.3 Theorising governments-in-exile: from realist approaches to critical re-interpretations

Having made the case for a sustained political geography focus on polities such as governments-in-exile I now want to shift attention to how we can go about theorising such polities. Crucial to such an analysis is, I argue, the conceptual triangle of state-sovereignty-territory. This framework not only constitutes the key concepts upon which debates in political geography are based, but is central to analysing the functions performed and limitations faced by these polities. Focusing on and charting the ontological and epistemological shifts that have occurred within the study of the state, sovereignty and territory from realist and statist approaches to critical non-statist perspectives, this section will situate the study of TGiE within this theoretical trajectory.

2.3.1 Realist approaches and the statist paradigm: governments-in-exile as geopolitical 'exceptions'

I want to begin with traditional realist and statist approaches to these concepts, not as a straw-man to topple, but because this is the prevailing framework through which such polities are conventionally viewed. Indeed, not only has this statist paradigm 'exercised a stranglehold on International Relations theory' and shaped policy discourses and diplomatic practices, but it has also 'monopolised our understanding of the political' (Castoriadis 1987: 7). Dominant in mainstream IR, political science and 'traditional' political geography, the conceptualisation of 'containers' of socio-political analysis is central to such perspectives whereby

political authority, territory and population are collapsed into a 'single unproblematic actor: the sovereign state' (Biersteker and Weber 1996: 5). This bundling of state and territory is fundamental to both the legal criteria for statehood (see Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States 1933, Article 1)[21] and definitions of the state. These include Weber's sociological understanding of the state as 'a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' (1948: 78), through Mann's (1984) designation as a set of centralised institutions which exercise power over a specific territory, to Giddens' definition as a 'political organisation whose rule is territorially ordered and which is able to mobilise the means of violence to sustain that rule' (1985: 20). This coalescing of bounded territory and political power in the form of the sovereign state has been adeptly critiqued by Agnew (1994) as a three-pronged 'territorial trap': an ahistorical reification of states as fixed units of sovereign space; a view of the state as the pre-existing container of 'society' and a dichotomising of domestic and foreign or inside and outside.

Turning to sovereignty, conventionally defined as the ultimate law-making authority within given territorial boundaries, this concept has been fundamental to theories of state-formation and IR theory. Sovereignty is traditionally seen to originate with the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and, as such, this moment of the rise of modern states 'becomes the foundational fiction of a system of mutual recognition of sovereignty' (Sidaway 2002: 44). Agnew argues that three assumptions are critical to this dominant approach: that there is equality between states claiming sovereignty; that sovereignty is absolute and indivisible; and that sovereignty is invariably territorial (2005: 440–441). In terms of the latter, sovereignty is taken to be a 'political legal fact *within* an already given and demarcated territory, simultaneously signifying sovereignty *over* the same territory' (Bartelson 1995: 29). Meanwhile, territory itself is conceptualised by such approaches as fixed location, as rigidly bounded and as contiguous.

With regards to how realist approaches perceive and theorise non-state entities, a number of trends are apparent. Most simply, geopolitical 'anomalies' are overlooked by realist theorists with their existence under-theorised and their achievements under-reported. Pegg's observations regarding the reasons for the

[21] Article 1 states that 'The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states.'

scant academic attention paid to de facto states is equally applicable to governments-in-exile, as he argues that:

> '[I]f the territorial map is seen as unalterable there is little incentive to devote much attention to de facto states because their ultimate defeat and reincorporation into existing states is both assumed and sought' (1998: 8).

In a similar vein, Kolossov and O'Loughlin describe such anomalies as 'geopolitical black holes' (2008: 152) and Shain argues that exile politics' position between the national and the international proves an awkward fit for disciplines traditionally premised on this division (1989: 6–7). Even though such non-state entities seek to operate *within* the international system (see above), still they are perceived by realist approaches as residing outside the territorial logic of sovereignty and operating in 'gaps' between, within and across territorially-bounded sovereign states. Rather than a 'deviation' from the state, governments-in-exile are thus conceptualised by the realist paradigm as extra-territorial *exceptions*, placed alongside statist readings of the transnational stories that:

> 'haunt the embassy, the law of the sea, the UN, the internet, international financial systems, and offshore economic zones... such are exceptions that define the rule whose primary "author", "creator" and "guarantor" remains the state' (Soguk and Whitehall 1999: 679).

Moreover, these entities demonstrate the continued persistence and inflexibility of international norms of sovereignty, recognition and statehood – a rigidity which has governed both what can be asked for and what can be granted – and thus illustrate the failure of realist IR to keep pace with changing geopolitical realities. The statist paradigm has therefore shaped and limited how we imagine geopolitical space both as it exists today and in terms of future possibilities, 'ignoring the fact that there are many other layers and spaces of politics' (Mandaville 1999: 656) and obscuring the 'possibility that distinctly new political forms are emerging' (Anderson 1996: 133).

A key component of this exceptionalising of non-state polities is the assumption that there exists either 'absolute' sovereignty or no sovereignty at all. As the 'other' to internationally recognised sovereign states, geopolitical anomalies are thus framed as lacking international status and legitimacy. This enduring hierarchical (and often colonial) binary logic of distinctions such as weak/strong sovereignty or positive/negative sovereignty (Jackson 1990) therefore offers little by way of constructive analysis of what such polities have realised (see Sidaway 2003).

Related to such binaries are normative descriptions of geopolitical anomalies which vary according to their origins and the extent to which they are seen to threaten the interstate order. So, for example, those resulting from incomplete decolonisation (e.g. trust territories, protectorates, dependencies) are often infantilised and perceived as not (yet) ready for independent statehood (Strang 1996). Meanwhile, shared sovereignties (e.g. leased territories, enclaves and condominiums) are conceived as inconvenient but necessary legal compromises, negotiated as the system of states attempts to regularise its 'awkward spaces'. At the other end of the spectrum are stateless nations and de facto states which, in the context of current fears of, and opposition to, secession are perceived as unlawful interventions and discrepant forms of political practice which are systemically disruptive to the established 'order of things' (Ashley 1988: 230). Entities such as TGiE can be placed towards the latter part of this spectrum. Although often regarded as benign due to TGiE's adherence to non-violence and the regard with which the Dalai Lama is generally held, the existence of this polity is nevertheless perceived as disruptive and, as I shall explore in the following chapters, the legal personality of TGiE is rarely openly acknowledged or declared.

Such framings of non-state entities in consistently negative terms (e.g. as illegal, anarchic and clandestine) and with regards to what they fail to achieve (sovereign territorial statehood) ultimately restricts analysis of these political structures and denigrates their achievements (Robinson 2003). If, as I assert, it is more productive to focus not on what governments-in-exile lack, but on their functionality and leverage of aspects of sovereignty, then more flexible and diverse notions of the organisation of political power over space are needed (Kingston and Spears 2004). These must, as Sidaway puts it, move 'beyond the issue of more or less sovereignty, beyond the presence or absence of undifferentiated sovereign power, towards a contextual understanding of different regimes, apparatus, expressions and representations of sovereignty' (2003: 174). I want to argue, therefore, that examining a case such as TGiE from a non-statist vantage point and employing critical rather than realist approaches can offer a more fruitful analysis of these polities, allowing us to unpack their workings and explore the parameters of their exercise of sovereignty.

2.3.2 De-centring the state and critical reinterpretations of power and space.

The state system is under challenge, 'not only in terms of its control over territory, but also its capture of cultural imagination' and there is an increasing drive to

'render mobile, fragile and contestable what traditional political discourses tend to naturalise' (Shapiro 1996: xxii, 138). Premised on such critiques, and in light of geopolitical events challenging the position and role of the state, a number of alternative approaches to statehood and territorial sovereignty have emerged within political geography, political anthropology and the fringes of IR (for critical IR see Ruggie 1993; Walker 1993; Weber 2001). Instrumental to such a shift within geography has been the field of critical geopolitics (see Dalby 1991; Dodds and Sidaway 1994; Ó Tuathail 1996; Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998). Employing a heterogeneous collection of theoretical perspectives associated with poststructuralism, and increasingly influenced by postcolonial and feminist approaches, critical geopolitics is premised upon denaturalising and problematising the concepts of the state and interstate system. This theoretical toolbox has therefore expanded political geography's gaze, broadening 'the scope of research, highlighting hidden acts of power that structure identities' (Dowler and Sharp 2001: 165) and fundamentally altering how geographers consider the relationship between politics, power and space (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). This section unpacks these trends in light of their utility for a focus on geopolitical anomalies such as TGiE. It will chart the journey of political geography from its traditional focus on the state and formal 'Politics', through the poststructuralist-informed shift to issues of power, governance and 'politics,' and finally to the critical return and productive problematisation of issues of the state, sovereignty and territory (Cox and Low 2003; Desbiens *et al* 2004).

Since the late 1980s there has been a growing consensus that political geography's traditional fixation with the state, its territoriality and a narrow conception of 'the Political' as formal institutionalised politics has profoundly limited the geopolitical imagination. In light of this, and influenced by feminist critiques and post-structuralist perspectives, there has been a shift of attention from institutional politics ("big P" politics) to 'politics understood as an aspect, potentiality, in any social relationship on any scale of social life ("little p"),' including everyday practices at the scale of the individual or the body (Häkli 2003: 658). The resulting diversification of political geography has thus 'engendered a greater sensitivity to the complexity of the spatial organisation of the world and the multiplicity of sites and processes that political geography... has to be concerned with' (Cox *et al* 2008: 2). A key element of this diversification, and in line with a post-positivist shift in human geography more generally, has been the emergence of power as a core concept within the sub-discipline (Painter 1995) and a concomitant shift of

attention away from issues of the state. This has meant increasing attention paid to what power means, how it should be understood in relation to issues of authority and legitimacy and the nature of the relationship between power and space. Broadly speaking, this has entailed a shift to seeing power not as absolute, centred and something which can be possessed and thus lost, but as diffused, decentred and networked: a relational effect rather than an attribute or property.

In an influential examination of modes of power and their relationship to space, Allen explores three 'spatial vocabularies of power': centred, networked and immanent (2003a: 6–9, 13–91). Examined in detail in the following chapters, each of these formulations of power intersects in important ways with the case of the TGiE's functioning within India. For example, Chapter 5 focuses on the tension between territorially bounded centralised power and territorially unbounded networked power (see Castells 1996; Giddens 1984; Mann 1993). Meanwhile, Chapter 6 attends to the crucial question of *how* power works by drawing on Foucault's (1977) theorisation of extra-territorial and immanent power where the state is relegated to a second-order institutional apparatus (Dean 1999. see also Hardt and Negri 2000).[22] Indeed, political geographers' mobilisation of Foucault's work on discipline, governmentality and biopower has profoundly altered how this sub-discipline has approached issues of power and space, shifting attention from so-called scales of power (e.g. Taylor and Flint 2000) to issues surrounding 'the varied points or sites of power and the relations between them' (Allen 2003b: 102. see Philo 1992; Hannah 2000; Legg 2007a).

A key influence of Foucault's work upon political geography has been the opening up of a research agenda around issues of governance and governmentality. As a far broader category than 'government', governmentality – the organised practices through which we are governed and through which we govern ourselves – 'breaks with many of the characteristic assumptions of theories of the state, such as problems of legitimacy, the notion of ideology and the questions of the possession and source of power' (Dean 1999: 9). It thereby 'provides a language and a framework for thinking about the linkages between questions of government, authority and politics and questions of identity, self and person' (*ibid*: 13). In thus

[22] Foucault's approach to the state is complex. In his earlier work, Foucault is renowned for his criticisms of state theory, rejecting outright a state-centred notion of power and advocating instead a bottom-up approach to power (e.g. *Discipline and Punish* 1977; Driver 1985). However, his later work on governmentality and biopolitics (Foucault 1991) marks 'a decisive turn... to interest in changing forms of statehood and statecraft' (Jessop 2007: 34). The intersection of this case with such issues is discussed in Chapter 6.

eschewing the assumption of an inextricable relationship between territory and sovereignty and displacing the notion of the state, Foucault's conceptualisation of governmentality opens up the possibility of diverse and heterogeneous agencies controlling the mechanisms of authority (Dean and Henman 2004: 483. See also Ong 1999; Rose-Redwood 2006). As such, this proves to be a valuable, flexible and nuanced framework for exploring the functioning of a non-state and territory-less polity such as TGiE (see Chapter 6).

However, despite the theoretical insights offered by such post-structuralist approaches, there are also notable drawbacks. These include the danger of emptying 'the political' of meaning through finding it everywhere and thus ultimately nowhere, and the problem that terms such as 'power,' 'governmentality' or 'spaces of flows' can be in many ways just as reifying as those they replace – 'the state' and 'sovereignty' (Low 2003: 630). In light of such critiques, there has been a revival of interest by political geographers in the traditional concepts of the sub-discipline – the state, sovereignty and territory – albeit examining these 'through an energetic engagement with wider social and political theory' (Cox *et al* 2008: 7). Low's reasoning is persuasive in this regard, when he argues for placing a concept

> 'in a critical context that allows us to go on using it, while recognising and acting on its insufficiency in relation to the claims it ostensibly makes... To note that, for example, state sovereignty (Ashley 1995) and popular sovereignty (Derrida 1984) are at some level "impossible" concepts, necessarily involving performative contradictions when they are invoked, is not to somehow get away from their nagging indispensability' (2003: 629, 630).

Returning to the conceptual framework of state-sovereignty-territory, I want to sketch out briefly how each of these elements has been problematised and conceptually unbundled, whilst also remaining useful. Turning first to the state, in a reaction against both the marginalisation of the state by post-structuralist approaches and the 'end of the state' (Ohmae 1996) and 'borderless world' (Appadurai 1990; O'Brien 1992; Castells 2000) globalisation theses of the 1990s, there has been a recent trend within political geography towards a 'de-centred centrality of the state' (Low 2003: 625).[23] This is based on an acknowledgement that transnational networks exist alongside traditional sovereign states (Ruggie

[23] Critiques of the 'death of the state' school of thought have coalesced around an argument that, though the state may indeed have lost some of its erstwhile importance and be increasingly 'hollowed out' by supra-national and sub-national process, it can hardly be said to be 'withering away' (Jessop 1994). Rather, whilst being qualitatively transformed in form and function, 'the concept-metaphor "nation-state"' manifests a 'ferocious recoding power' (Spivak 1992: 101 cited in Shapiro 2003: 272).

1993), and thus 'a mixture of old, new and hybrid forms and processes are now operating at and between different levels, above, below and including the state' (Anderson 1996: 150).

Such an approach is essential for understanding non-state entities. In comprehending sovereign statehood as only one particular mode of territorial practice this opens up the possibility of different forms of political territoriality which selectively adapt and promote aspects of statehood so as to further their agendas (Forsberg 1996). Indeed, somewhat counter-intuitively, an empirical focus on a non-state entity such as TGiE does not call for the removal of the state from our theoretical framework. Rather, the *idea* and *ideal* of the state is fundamental to understanding this polity. Not only does TGiE have a number of state-like qualities (as explored in the following chapters), but polities such as this are one of the strongest vindications of the power inherent within the state concept. As Talmon explains vis-à-vis governments-in-exile in general, the very existence of these entities is contingent on their home state being occupied by a 'colonising' state, their political activities are curtailed by their operating within a host state, and their ultimate aspiration is often to (re)establish their own independent state (1998: vii).[24] Therefore, rather than a transnational phenomenon that debunks the notion of the nation-state per se, a polity such as TGiE in fact reconfirms the salience of the idea of the sovereign state model, both in reality (the lack of recognition of these entities by other states restricts their functioning) and in the imagination (the desire for sovereign statehood in the 'homeland'). As such, the complex and often contradictory relationship between TGiE and the idea of the state necessitates and validates a framework such as that outlined above which, while decidedly not state-centric, does acknowledge the importance of the state as an ideal to aspire to.

Early critical problematisations of the state itself include Poulantzas' (1978) concept of institutional materiality whereby the state should be regarded not as an intrinsic entity but as a social relation (see also Camilleri and Falk 1992). However, arguing that this is the replacement of one reification (state-as-entity) with another (state-as-structure), Mitchell asserts that the state has conventionally been seen as an abstract concept, something elusive with 'ghost-like' (1991: 91) qualities, which Abrams has termed the 'idea of the state' (1988: 77). Such

[24] It should be noted that, in the case of TGiE, the administration's current position is not to call for an independent Tibetan state but rather for genuine Tibetan autonomy within a greater China (see Chapter 3).

approaches have marked a significant shift in thinking about the state from an emphasis on the material to one on the discursive whereby the more statehood is analysed and 'deconstructed' the more elusive and intangible it seems (Cox 2008: 92). Central to such approaches is an empirical and theoretical conjoining of the cultural and political. This enables us to see state institutions and governmental policies as fundamentally cultural and contested constructs, with the arena of formal politics legitimated through culture (Baldwin *et al* 1999) and the distinctiveness of the state and its priority over other entities being the result of cultural techniques (Steinmetz 1999). With regards to this case, the following chapters explore the extent to which Tibetan culture and religion underpin and influence the form, function and political ideologies of TGiE. In broader terms, the relationship between formal political structures and cultural theory can create a mutually beneficial dialogue between traditional political and cultural disciplines. The reciprocal exchange of approaches engenders a more critical and theoretically informed approach to the study of state structures and the interstate system, and imports concrete and material ideas regarding political institutions and international politics to an increasingly esoteric cultural geography.

In focusing critical attention on the ontological status of the state, Mitchell argues that it is a 'structural effect' and 'should be examined not as an actual structure, but as the powerful metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist' (1991: 94). Thus conceiving the state as socially constructed and a 'historically and geographically specific institutional complex' (Low 2003: 630), statecraft can be understood not as relations between different state units, but as the construction and reconstruction of the units themselves (Campbell 1992; Weber 1998; Painter 2006). In a similar vein, perceiving statehood as relative, different entities can be seen to meet the criteria for international statehood to a greater or lesser degree, with conventional states often failing to enact the range of statehood functions, and less-than-state entities taking on attributes customarily associated with sovereign statehood (Clapham 1998: 143). As such, statehood – and its signifiers and institutions – can be understood as strategic resources which are continually deployed by both 'recognised' and unrecognised polities.

The concept of sovereignty has also both re-emerged as an issue of critical analysis and undergone a number of reconceptualisations in recent years in light of post-structuralist approaches and emerging global discourses (Agamben 1998; Elden 2006). Like the concept of the state, the aim here is not to join calls for the rejection

of the sovereignty problematic (Camilleri and Falk 1992), but rather to work *with* the concept of sovereignty in order to explore the extent to which it can be 'subverted and challenged and yet reinscribe itself (Edkins *et al* 1999: 2). Such critical readings denaturalise and problematise sovereignty, positing it as a heterogeneous and complex array of concepts and processes. Sovereignty is thereby conceptualised as contingent upon, rather than fundamental to, political science and its history (Barkin and Cronin 1994; Bartelson 1995), with Krasner (1999) arguing that states have never been as sovereign as some have supposed. Similarly, rather than proceeding from the assumption that all states are sovereign, a number of political anthropologists and critical IR theorists have focused on how states constantly negotiate and reconfigure their sovereignty through practices, performances, discourses and everyday materialities (Biersteker and Weber 1996; Hansen and Stepputat 2005). Such conceptualisations of sovereignty as historically contingent and socially constructed (Ashley 1988; Walker 1993; Weber 1995) are vital for a theoretical analysis of polities such as TGiE. Not only do they blur the line between the sovereign and the non-sovereign and conceive sovereignty as divisible and incremental (Agnew 2005), but they enable key questions to be asked: if polities 'can lose sovereignty, can they also gain it' (Elden 2006: 18)? What is it that is sovereign: an abstract notion of the TGiE structure itself, or the practices of its officials and interactions between exiled 'citizens' and 'their' government? Can two sovereignties (albeit one unrecognised) overlap and co-exist within the same territory?

Reconceptualisations of political space have also moved beyond reified, abstract and absolute notions of territory and state-space as bounded and contiguous (e.g. Elkins 1995; Forsberg 2003). This has involved sensitivity to different forms of territory – with a focus on networks – and the conceptualisation of territory as a process as opposed to merely a location (Weber 1998). As Forsberg asserts:

> 'boundaries don't have to be fixed, they can be fluid, they don't have to be linear, they can be zonal, they don't have to be continuous they can be disconnected, they don't have to be mutually exclusive they can overlap' (1996: 363).

If we are to accept territory as socially constructed, then critical readings of 'territoriality', a 'device to create and maintain the geographic context through which we experience the world and give it meaning' are highly instructive (Sack 1986: 219. See also Gottman 1973; Malmberg 1980). As the main exponent of this

concept within geography, Sack rejects conventional interpretations of territoriality as an appendix to sovereignty and instead posits it as a phenomenon in its own terms. Similarly, Kolstø, in conceiving it as a fluid and malleable property, argues that 'territoriality is not a given, it is determined not only by geography, demography and history, but also by such intangibles as perceptions and ideas' (1999: 607). This is an assertion which, as I shall argue in this study, is invaluable when examining the relationship between 'real' and symbolic territory in the context of TGiE.

Such nuanced readings of the state, sovereignty and territory enable the conceptual unbundling of the these traditional constituent elements of sovereign statehood so often conflated in political analysis (Anderson 1996). Following Ruggie (1993), Anderson argues for the 'dispersal of authority to different types of institutions at different levels' (1996: 140) reminiscent of the vertically segmented and overlapping authority which existed in Europe before the rise of the modern state. Similarly, Biersteker and Weber assert that such disentangling of state and sovereignty 'enables us to consider whether the salience of territoriality has changed historically such that entities other than territorial states can begin to make legitimate (externally recognised) claims of final authority' (1996: 19). My argument here is that critical analytical attention paid to polities such as TGiE would add important empirical weight to such conceptual unbundling and further enhance our reappraisals of the notions of sovereignty, statehood and territory.

However, a note of caution is worth sounding regarding these critical reinterpretations of the core concepts of the state, sovereignty and territory, especially in light of this case. Whilst there is increasing acknowledgement within critical political geography that the traditional 'geopolitical gaze triangulates the world political map from a Western imperialist vantage point, measures it using Western conceptual systems of identity/difference, and records it in order to bring it within the scope of Western imaginings' (Ó Tuathail 1996: 53), more sensitivity to the structural positionality of seemingly 'universal' concepts of the political is vital, including those made in critical guise (Sidaway 2008: 48). In light of this, the Western concepts of the state and sovereignty, which carry with them 'specific assumptions about order, the secular and the sacred' (Sidaway *et al* 2004: 1046), will be applied with caution to this case. In the following chapters, attention will be paid to how the exile Tibetan elite have both drawn on Tibetan cultural, religious and political values and appropriated Western political discourses (notably

democracy, citizenship and civil society, see Chapters 6, 7 and 8), often reflecting back Western ideals to a Western audience in order to seek legitimacy. This case therefore speaks to calls within political geography to adopt a critical intellectual stance of postcoloniality, to learn from 'different traditions of scholarship and diverse political contexts' (Robinson 2003: 648) and thus to re-pluralise political space.

2.3.3 Summary

The relations between state, power and territory are perceived by contemporary political geographers as increasingly contingent, with the insistence that political power is not necessarily only state power (Dalby 1991) nor necessarily territorially constituted (Anderson 1996; Agnew 2005). With such nuanced accounts of sovereignty, territory and statehood being attentive to the diversity of state forms and sovereign practices, they can potentially open up different ways in which geopolitical 'anomalies' such as governments-in-exile can come into view. However, despite this, non-state polities have as yet failed to figure significantly on research agendas within political geography. One suggestion for such neglect is that whilst the empirical focus of critical geopolitics has to date been predominantly on dramatic geopolitical processes and events – accelerated globalisation (Herod *et al* 1998; Sparke 2004a), post-soviet fragmentation and the 'new world order' (Ó Tuathail and Luke 1994), and the war on terror (Dalby 2007; Dodds 2008) – governments-in-exile challenge the geopolitical world order in markedly understated ways. As explored below and in the following chapters, it is at the local level and through everyday interactions, objects and people that the TGiE both constructs its claims to legitimacy, and asserts its presence as a government. Indeed, it is precisely because of these qualities that governments-in-exile *should* be on political geography's research agenda, as knowledge of them can enrich existing debates and go some way to countering critical geopolitics' fixation with discourse, representation and textuality (see Dowler and Sharp 2001; Hyndman 2004). Moreover, not only would a focus on non-state polities enable a much-needed shift of attention to the global South by a sub-discipline whose traditional focus has been on the formal politics of stable states of the (English-speaking) developed world (Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2008: 152. For critiques see Robinson 2003; Sidaway 2003), but entities such as TGiE are in essence 'positive' stories of political achievement, nascent democracy, innovative bureaucracies and community cohesion. As such, they call for a re-valuing of the political and offer a welcome counterweight to contemporary political geography's focus on conflict, violence and

terror (Flint 2005; Gregory and Pred 2007. For calls to engage with issues of non-violence and co-operation see Kearns 2008; Megoran 2008).

2.4 Political geographies of statelessness

Critical reconceptualisations of the state, sovereignty and territory are, as I have argued, a vital framework for analysing polities such as TGiE. However, the inherently contradictory nature of TGiE leaves important issues unaddressed – issues which do not come under the rubric of 'normal' states and governments. These include the displacement and uncertain legal status of exilic populations, the relationship with a host state, the political agenda of returning to a homeland and concerns of rootlessness in exile. There is a tendency for mainstream statist discourses to privilege borders, to devalue migrations and to construct the stateless and their administrations as deviations from the norm of geopolitics (Shapiro 1996). Although critical and cultural approaches have significantly altered our view of political space, power and identity, the study of migrants, refugees and diaspora remain on the margins of analysis, 'rooted in(between) states' (Soguk and Whitehall 1999: 681). Thus, if 'statehood' is not a completely satisfactory descriptor for governments-in-exile, then we need to look elsewhere, to political geographies of statelessness. I therefore want to shift attention to a body of knowledge which, rather than defining refugees/exiles/migrants as 'mere appendages to the presumed master history of borders, boundaries and states' (*ibid*: 675) focuses upon and privileges the lives and politics of the stateless. Spanning disciplines of law, anthropology, development studies and cultural and political geographies, such an alternative can be found in refugee studies, diaspora literature and theories of transnationalism. Taking each of these literatures in turn – a progression from legalistic refugee studies to cultural theory-informed transnationalism and diaspora studies – I want to briefly sketch out how each raises important issues for populations associated with governments-in-exile, and, in turn, how an empirical focus on TGiE challenges key tenets of these literatures. Finally, I will focus on three key debates in this literature regarding the role of states, conceptualisations of territory and constructions of political identity with which this case directly intersects.

2.4.1 Refugee studies, diaspora literature and theories of transnationalism

Drawing on literature from refugee studies is an obvious step for an investigation of polities such as TGiE as it facilitates a focus on the legal status of exiles within

the host state (Chimni 2000; Samaddar 2003). This includes issues around humanitarianism (Hyndman 2000), human rights and refugee law (Harvey 1999); discourses of refugeehood and the political project of 'returning home' (Bakewell 2000); and issues raised by refugee camps and settlements (Malkki 1995; Perouse and Mwangi Kaganja 2000). Refugee studies has grown dramatically in the latter part of the twentieth-century, developing into an independent research domain whose output has conventionally been policy-oriented and often conducted collaboratively with policy organisations and relief agencies. This emphasis on policy concerns to the neglect of critical theoretical reflection and integrated scholarship has, as Black (2001) argues, served to marginalise refugee studies from mainstream social science. Such a critique is reminiscent of those levelled at the broader field of international migration studies which, traditionally rooted in positivism and employing quantitative methods, often presents migrants as a de-personalised undifferentiated mass whose movement across borders leaves the position of the state undisputed (Turton 2003: 4–5).[25] However, as explored in Chapter 7, exile communities such as the Tibetan case complicate and fundamentally disrupt both the state/stateless binary of citizenship and refugeehood, and conventional understandings of the legal and political categories of 'refugee' and 'citizen'.

Whilst not a research field per se, literary discussions regarding the concept and label of 'exile' offer an alternative perspective (Rose 2005). In a useful disentangling of terms, Said asserts that, while 'the word "refugee" has become a political one, suggesting large herds of innocent bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance', 'expatriates' on the other hand, live voluntarily in alien countries while émigrés 'enjoy an ambiguous status' and finally exiles, forced to leave their home and cut off from their history, are in a 'discontinuous state of being [carrying]... a touch of solitude and spirituality' (1984: 49–56). Often employed as a self-definition rather than a label imposed from above, 'exile' carries with it connotations of displacement, dislocation, dispossession and, as discussed below, foregrounds the important issues of non-assimilation in the host state and the trials of waiting for 'return' (see Chapters 5 and 7).

[25] However, looking beyond refugee studies per se, the theoretical situating of refugee issues within other disciplines such as geography (Black 1991; Hyndman 2000), sociology (Hein 1993) and anthropology (Malkii 1995; Colson 2001) has led to the use of the particular circumstances of refugee situations to illuminate more general issues (Black 2001: 61).

Offering a more theoretically informed and critical approach to issues of statelessness, literatures on diaspora and transnationalism challenge the state-centrism of policy-oriented scholarship focused on refugees and international migration. Influenced by the cultural and critical turns within the social sciences, theories of diaspora and transnationalism disrupt the categories through which we understand the political world, turning attention to multiple scales, the transgression of boundaries and the contestation of identities. These literatures therefore offer ways out of the trap of refugees and exiles being considered imitations of 'real' citizens and stateless populations standing in a hierarchically subordinate relation to nation and homeland (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 8). This enables 'the stateless' to be seen as running 'with, and not against, the grain of identity, movement and reproduction' (Appadurai 1996: 171). As such, and key to this project, transnational political practices challenge conceptions of membership and rights, opening up space for notions of non-state citizenship and leading to processes of extra-territorial nation-building.

Diaspora studies, and contemporary theorisations of diaspora as a specific terrain within and beyond postcolonial studies, has emerged as a vibrant area of research since the early 1990s (see Clifford 1994; Brah 1996; Cohen 1996; Lavie and Swedenberg 1996). Transformed from a descriptive condition applied largely to Jews in exile, diaspora has increasingly become a catch-all phrase to speak of and for 'a multitude of ethnic, religious and national communities who find themselves living outside of the territory to which they are historically "rooted"' (Carter 2005: 55) and, as I shall explore below, has emerged as a contested theoretical space. Whilst the concept of diaspora is clearly associated with transnationalism, with the 'dispersed diasporas of old hav[ing] become today's "transnational communities"' (Vertovec 1999: 499) the terms are not synonymous. On the one hand, diaspora is a specifically human phenomenon with diasporic identities being practised, experienced and lived, and with diaspora studies focusing on issues of belonging and imagined geographies of the homeland. On the other hand, transnationalism is seen as a descriptor of the processes and flows initiated and negotiated by communities rather than solely acting on the communities themselves. As such, it can speak to larger more impersonal and material forces, being used to describe NGOs, multi-national corporations and dissident political organisations as well as individuals (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 15). In light of this, transnationalism would appear, at first glance, to be a more useful framework for focusing on exile political structures such as TGiE as well as the populations they represent.

Theoretical issues surrounding transnationalism gained ground in the late 1990s across a range of disciplines as academics sought to 'define and trace the development of transnational communities and practices, and examine the ramifications for identity and citizenship in an increasingly globalised world' (Al-Ali *et al* 2001: 578). Unlike earlier theories of migration which characterised border crossings as one of either permanent rupture followed by assimilation in a new society, or as one of temporary 'sojourning' followed by a return home, transnationalism describes an ongoing series of cross-border movements in which numerous economic, political and cultural links are maintained in more than one nation.[26] Theoretically, studies of transnationalism can be grouped into two broad categories. Firstly, political economy approaches which attend to the material transformations associated with the accelerated globalisation of capitalism, and, secondly, writings situated within postmodern and postcolonial discourses which, as discussed below, highlight issues of hybridity, rootlessness and deterritorialisation (Hyndman 2000). Across these approaches, in what is a 'highly fragmented, emergent field' (Portes *et al* 1999: 218), empirical research on transnationalism has to date focused on phenomena as diverse as transnational urban politics and social movements (Smith and Guarnizo 1998), emerging transnational cultural forms (Appadurai 1996), transnational labour and transnational elites (Yeung 1998), transnational identities (Morely and Robins 1995) and transnational inter-governmental agencies and NGOs (Jackson *et al* 2004).

However, whilst claiming to offer progressive attempts 'to find sites of resistance to dominant hegemonies of race and nation' (Mitchell 1997a: 533), many scholars are increasingly critical of the elite ideology underpinning post-foundational approaches to transnationalism and diaspora (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Sparke 2005). Such critiques assert that the overuse of abstract spatial metaphors such as 'third space' and the fetishisation of the term 'transnationalism' and its disarticulation from geopolitical history can lead to theories and politics which neglect both powerfully oppressive socio-economic forces underpinning these geographies and the everyday lives and grounded practices of the people caught up

[26] Whilst there has been enlightening debate as to the extent to which transnationalism is a new phenomenon or merely a new take on an old and ongoing phenomenon (Vertovec 1999), there is a growing consensus that contemporary transnational connections are different from the past in terms of range and depth, density and significance and scale of intensity and simultaneity (Portes *et al* 1999; Jackson *et al* 2004).

in them (Mitchell 1997a). This therefore leads to the potential danger of theories of transnationalism, mobility and the 'hype of hybridity' (Mitchell 1997b) ending up in a 'global babble' (Abu-Lughod 1991) which is emptied of political efficacy (Ong and Nonini 1997). Three research agendas proposed by such critiques are salient here and, as I will argue in the following chapters, the case of TGiE can also work to challenge some of the theoretical assumptions made by this literature.

2.4.2 Statelessness theory and questions of the state, territory and identity

In general, diasporic communities and their transnational practices navigate between nations and across space, cross-cutting the dominant framing of territorial sovereignty and thereby challenging the hegemony of the nation-state (Diener 2008). As such, they go some way to dis-ordering the conventions of statehood as presented in traditional and neorealist geopolitics (Hyndman 2000). Influenced by cultural studies approaches and theories of poststructuralism, some promoters of transnationalism have claimed that a 'post-nationalist' order (Basch *et al* 2004: 222) is emerging 'in which the nation-state is becoming obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken place' (Appadurai 1996: 166–167).

However, whilst acknowledging that transnational flows of people, commodities and ideas have disrupted the significance of national boundaries, there has also been a shift of attention to the ongoing and active role of nation-states in defining the terms under which transnational processes are played out (see Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Ong 1999; Jackson *et al* 2004). As such, a growing body of literature is charting the expansion of home state links with their expatriate communities (see Basch *et al* 1994; Levitt *et al* 2003) and the impact of host state political contexts on the transnational practices of migrants and refugees (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2001). As indicated in Chapter 1, the role of the host state and the relationships and interactions between TGiE and the GoI will be a key part of this project. An important aspect of this, and one that literature on diaspora and exile offer an important analytical framework for, are temporal issues surrounding the temporariness or permanence of life within the host state, the contested adherence to a politics of 'return' and the uncertainties and insecurities such an existence 'in limbo' entails (Said 1984; Rose *et al* 2005). Indeed, Shain argues that it is the 'exiles' continuous struggle to facilitate the conditions for their return but also their determination not to establish life abroad as a comfortable option, even temporarily' (1989: xix) which distinguishes them from other diasporas. The

strategies through which TGiE seeks to intervene in such temporal issues will be explored in the following chapters.

Crucially, the institution of TGiE itself adds an important angle to this literature. Alongside supporting calls for a sustained focus on the internal dynamics of immigrant groups (Veronis 2007) and the role of institutions and disciplining structures (Ong 1999), the position and state-like functioning of TGiE turns attention to the important political structures that transnational communities bring with them and (re)establish in exile (Al-Ali *et al* 2001).[27] Moreover, with its defined political agenda, established bureaucratic structures, welfare provision and construction of Tibetan citizenship, the TGiE and its exile population is a far more clearly defined and structured community than most diasporas. As such, this raises the question of the extent to which 'diaspora' – a term increasingly adopted by the exile Tibetan elite – is the best descriptor for this community or, indeed, whether TGiE can offer a more robust and contextualised conceptualisation of diaspora (Anand 2003; Diener 2008). In addition, the fact that this is ostensibly a refugee community means that this case can provide an empirical platform for connecting contemporary diaspora discourses with issues raised by refugee studies. As Wahlbeck (1998) argues, such a juncture of refugeehood with transnational practices can be mutually beneficial for the theoretical debates in each field, refining conceptualisations of refugee experiences and grounding the idea of diaspora (see also Shami 1996). Cross-cutting this is recent research on subaltern cosmopolitanism (Gidwani 2006; Mitchell 2007). Distinct from both cosmopolitanism as a normative political project (Pogge 2002) and as representing an ephochal transition in the nature of modernity (Beck 2006), such an approach offers a potentially more productive framework for examining TGiE's capacity to mediate its position between different cultural and political environments. Moreover, as Jeffrey and McFarlane (2008) argue, performing cosmopolitanism can be read as a strategic resource through which non-elite people and institutions seek to consolidate and legitimate practices of power.

Secondly, paralleling this focus on the role of states vis-à-vis transnational practices is a reconsideration of the issue of territory. In opposition to the

[27] Al-Ali *et al*'s distinction between 'transnational activities' and 'transnational capabilities' (2001: 594) is enlightening in the case of relationships between transnational individuals and their home and host states. For example, transnational capabilities focuses attention on the extent to which individuals and communities identify with their home countries, the skills and resources available to them to become involved in their countries of destination and, central to this case, the internal organisation of exile communities and the level of motivation to maintain group solidarity (*ibid*: 581).

spatialities associated with the nation – territory, belonging and rootedness – post-structuralist approaches to transnationalism and diaspora posit political space in terms of dislocation, rootlessness and in-betweeness (Jackson *et al* 2004: 4). Highly influential in this field are the ideas of Appadurai (1990) who, in elaborating on Deleuze and Guttari's (1987) uncoded flows of de-territorialisation, specifies five dimensions of disjunctive 'cultural flows' – ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes and ideoscapes – which undermine 'the power of the modernist conceptions and assumptions on space/movement/identity' and decentre the state (Soguk 1996: 288). However, in calling for increased empirical focus, re-politicisation and geographical 'grounding' of transnationalism, a number of geographers have turned attention to issues of materiality in relation to processes of *re*-territorialisation as well as de-territorialisation (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Indeed, Carter (2005) suggests drawing on the reconfiguration of political territoriality developed within critical geopolitics to focus on these processes within transnational and diasporic communities. As such, the extent to which the exile Tibetan community in India supports Lavie and Swedenberg's assertion that diasporas have a 'doubled relationship or dual loyalty' to places in terms of 'their connections to the space they currently occupy and their continuing involvement with 'back home' (1996: 14. see also Huang *et al* 2000) will be explored in the following chapters. This will entail examining the multiple attachments and re-attachments to 'real' territory, spaces and places within the host state and important symbolic and material attachments to the homeland of Tibet.[28] However, given the contested relationship between exile Tibetans and their 'home' state of China (see Chapter 3), the degree to which the conventional transnational role of home state and homeland is displaced and re-worked in this case will also be outlined (see Chapter 5).

The third key point of intersection between TGiE and theories of transnationalism and diaspora is the issue of identity. The conventional statist notion of political identity is founded upon a presumption of equivalence between the locatedness of people in territory and the limits of their political practices (Mach 1993). In a similar vein, more traditional approaches to diaspora portray 'closed' homogenous ethnic groups rooted metaphorically to the homeland and are premised on the nation-state and identity as bounded and unquestioned categories. In contrast,

[28] The fact that the importance of TGiE's territorial base in India (Chapters 5 and 6) runs counter to Armstrong's definition of diaspora as 'any ethnic collectivity which lacks at territorial base within a given polity' (1976: 393) again questions the extent to which this case fits the label of 'diaspora'.

rejecting such fixed and essentialised renditions of identity, much contemporary literature on transnational and diasporic identities emerging from a cultural studies approach theorise identity as fragmented, multiple, contingent and fluid (Venturino 1997). This represents a shift from 'diaspora as condition' to 'broader conceptualisations of travel, displacement, dislocation, and divided loyalties' (Mitchell 1997a: 534; Patterson and Kelley 2000). Focused on decentred attachments to place, diaspora has become synonymous with living 'in-between' spaces and cultures, celebrations of nomadic or 'travelling' identities and ideas of hybridity and creolisation (see Gilroy 1993; Brah 1996; Clifford 1997). Work on diasporas and transnational communities has also increasingly rejected the assertion that diaspora consciousness is incommensurate with nationalism and instead stresses that 'nationalism in all its forms, ranging from more subtle versions to fierce nationalist struggles, often goes side by side with transnationalism, and might even be a reaction to it' (Al-Ali *et al* 2001: 588). The extent to which the case of TGiE supports and extends this idea of a 'creative tension' between diaspora and nationalism (Ong 1999: 17) will be explored in the following chapters through a focus on the exile administration's nation-building activities, its efforts to unite the exile community and its promotion of a single Tibetan identity. In light of this, the case of TGiE will be used to shed an empirical spotlight on the perceived binary between identity as hybrid, mutable and transnational on the one hand and as essentialised, static and nationalised on the other (see Lavie and Swedenberg 1996).

2.4.3 Summary

In light of literatures on statelessness, I have highlighted the need to negotiate a careful path between traditional perspectives which consider essentialised categories such as 'refugee,' 'migrant' and 'diaspora' unproblematically and post-structuralist approaches to transnationalism which foreground hybridity, fluidity and in-betweeness. More generally, I have argued that whilst there has been increasing attention paid both to the state and to political aspects of statelessness within contemporary political geography, these research trends are rarely integrated. In addition, I have argued that an exiled polity such as TGiE both intersects with and fails to fit the conventional remit of theories related to the state and to statelessness. As a polity and community which fundamentally disrupts the fixed binaries of state/non-state, sovereign/non-sovereign, refugee/citizen this case is therefore a useful lens through which these divergent issues can be viewed simultaneously and can go some way to creating conceptual dialogue and empirical

connections between these bodies of knowledge. This would require state-centred IR and political geography to more fully embrace issues of displacement, instability and contingency and, in turn, identity-focused diaspora and transnationalism studies to engage with institutional structures, formal politics and issues of power and governance. Therefore, whilst the literatures discussed above may contribute to a political geography of statelessness, they each fail to add up to it. Rather, I suggest that drawing upon, bringing together and working across these research fields can offer a productive way to rethink issues of authority, legitimacy, governance, identity, territory and statehood.

2.5 Conclusion: from binaries and categories to relationships and practices

This chapter has examined how non-state polities such as governments-in-exile intersect with political geography literature in both confirmatory and challenging ways, highlighting gaps in existing theory and taking debates in new and unexpected directions. In sketching out the 'network of islands of "transitional" or "incomplete" statehood' which has become an increasingly unavoidable part of contemporary geopolitical reality (Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2008: 151–152), I have argued for the expansion of political geography's gaze to critically engage with a range of non-state polities; entities whose existence and functioning speak directly to political geography's concerns with the relationship between power and space. In order to find a theoretical perspective in which governments-in-exile and the populations they represent are defined in terms of *having* key political attributes instead of lacking them, and as belonging to the geopolitical order instead of existing outside it, a progression through a range of literatures has been charted. This has included realist informed statist views of the state and interstate system, non-statist approaches based on critical and cultural theory through a range of literature, on statelessness. In turn, not only does the exception has something to tell us about the rule, but the functioning of such polities throws into relief far broader themes and processes. Therefore, polities such as TGiE should not be analysed solely for their 'quirkiness', as 'one of the weirdest corners of international politics' (*The Economist* 22, December 2001: 45). As lived experimentations in international law they are significant, rather than marginal, actors in reconfiguring notions of sovereignty, territory and statehood.

Moreover, in addition to encouraging the blurring of disciplinary boundaries, the tensions between statehood and statelessness which characterise the functioning of TGiE productively complicate taken-for-granted categories within political geography. As outlined above, there is often a poor fit between conventional categories such as 'state', 'citizen', 'diaspora' or 'refugee' and the lived realities of governments-in-exile and their dependent populations. In light of this, it is arguably more productive to focus on the processes, practices and relationships which are involved, rather than the categories which non-state polities (fail to) fit into. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the utility of categories in framing and making comprehensible the world around us (Cloke and Johnston 2005), the ambiguity of geopolitical 'anomalies'[29] fundamentally problematises the process of categorisation (Moncrieffe and Eyben 2007). Indeed, as indicated in Section 2.2, even the label 'government-in-exile' is arguably inadequate to describe the divergent group of entities to which it is attached and therefore hinders rather than helps our understanding of exiled administrations. However, I want to argue that it is precisely this ambiguity that should be of key interest to political geographers. In particular, the political ambiguity of polities such as governments-in-exile can be instrumental in exposing the power relations inherent in the categorising and labelling process, demonstrating the Foucauldian argument that 'categories do not simply mimetically represent the world but instead simultaneously *create it* and *limit it*' (Jones 2009: 4). Crucially, therefore, the heterogeneity of non-state – yet state-like – entities such as TGiE fundamentally limits the utility of the entire 'state' concept (Pegg 1998: 45), exposing its partial and processual nature. This project is therefore an attempt to shift attention away from thinking in terms of closed categories – such as the state, (absolute) sovereignty, refugee, citizen, diaspora – organised into binary relationships as either nation-states or anomalies deviating from this model. Instead it moves towards the variety of ways in which seemingly universal and standard concepts such as sovereignty, legitimacy and territoriality can be (re)articulated in a situation of exile. Moreover, by focusing on the single elucidatory case of the TGiE this enables such issues to be examined in a range of ways and from a number of different theoretical perspectives, and it is to contextualising this case study that I now turn.

[29] In light of this, my use of the terms 'anomaly' and 'non-state' and the normative hierarchies upon which it is based should also be problematised.

Chapter 3
Setting the Scene: The Legal Ambiguity of Tibet and its '(Re)establishment' in Exile

3.1 Introduction

In March 2008 the sight of maroon-robed monks demanding Tibetan independence and armed Chinese military on the streets of Lhasa (re)turned the world's attention to Tibet. The site of a protracted and oft-ignored struggle over homeland, identity and self-governance, this is a case which conjures up strong and often conflicting pictures in the popular imagination. On the one hand, it is the fabled and romantisiced Shangri-la (Bishop 1989; Dodin and Rather 2001) and, on the other hand, it is a nation whose inhabitants and religion are feudal and inferior (Goldstein 1971). Whilst this thesis seeks to shine an academic spotlight on a key but often overlooked player in this story – the TGiE, and the broader reconfigurations of territory and sovereignty it signals – this chapter sets this polity in its wider historical and geopolitical context. It begins by sketching out the complex and often ambiguous legal and political status of the territory of Tibet, focusing on relations between Tibet, China and India and outlining conflicting historical, territorial and sovereignty claims. Attention will then shift to the Tibetan government and community in exile, setting out four key contexts which underpin this study: the development and institutional structures of TGiE itself; the relationship between religion and politics and the role of the Dalai Lama; TGiE's relations with India and the international community; and an overview of the exile population including refugee displacements and the wider diaspora. Finally, the ways that Tibet and the exile community have been approached in and through academic literature will be sketched out and this study situated within this research field.

3.2 The ambiguous status of Tibet: conflicting historical, territorial and sovereignty claims

Controversy surrounds the legal, territorial and political status of Tibet, a vast high altitude plateau north of the Himalayas which has been contested for over 1000 years. Chinese authorities maintain that Tibet has been and remains an 'inseparable part of China' (Wei 1989: 27) and, as such, treats its relation with Tibet as one of internal affairs. The counter-narrative, posited by TGiE, their supporters and an increasing number of Western scholars and lawyers (e.g. van

Walt van Praag 1987; McCorquodale and Orosz 1994) asserts that Tibet is an independent state under unlawful Chinese occupation.[30] In order to explore these historical and political 'confrontations of representations' (Goldstein 1997: 56) I want to briefly sketch out some of the historical assertions underlying these claims and then turn attention to the role India has played in this region. The section concludes with some comments on how the contemporary situation is understood and represented by these various actors.

3.2.1 China and Tibet: imperial prerogatives, religious alliances and recognition of 'suzerainty'

Beijing's principal claims to Tibet rest upon two historical assertions. Firstly, that the government of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) is the rightful inheritor of the territories ruled by the succession of Chinese dynasties, and, secondly, that since the early medieval period the ethnically Tibetan territories have been subject territories of such imperial rule (People's Republic of China 1992). In contrast, Tibetans assert that over the centuries Tibet both extended its influence over neighbouring polities and peoples and, in other periods, came itself under the influence of powerful foreign rulers such as the Mongol Khans, the Manchu emperors and the British rulers of India (van Walt van Praag 1987). Moreover, TGiE asserts that Tibet's diplomatic relations were religious alliances with the Mongol dynasties that invaded and ruled the China in the thirteenth-century, and only secondarily with China itself (DIIR 1996). Thus, while these various arrangements involved differing degrees of constitutional dependence and independence vis-à-vis China, they did not constitute Tibet's subjugation to, or unification with China, but rather a continued status somewhere between autonomy and independence.[31]

Turning to the twentieth-century, the TGiE asserts that the 13th Dalai Lama unilaterally declared independence in 1913 and, until 1950, Tibet was a sovereign state whose full independence was recognised in numerous ways on the international stage. This included formal communications between the 13th Dalai Lama and foreign leaders, Tibet's neutrality during World War II (despite pressure from China, Britain and the USA) and the Tibetan Government's establishment of

[30] See Powers (2004) for a fascinating comparison of literature on Tibetan history produced by Tibetan and Chinese authors in English which illustrates how the narratives on both sides are fraught by internal contradictions and inconsistencies.

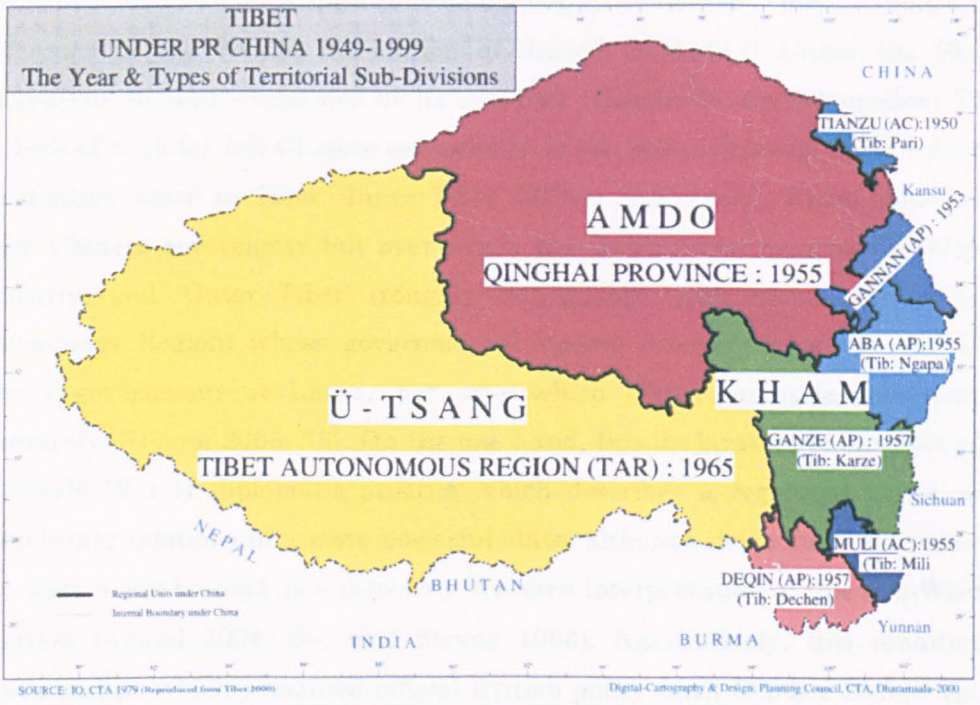
[31] These relations were modelled on the explicitly 'religious patron-priest (or *chöyon*) relationship, in which – through acting as the spiritual guides to successive emperors – key Tibetan leaders acted as their religious superiors, for which they received economic support and military protection' (Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Tibet 2008: 6).

independent diplomatic and economic relations with its neighbours, most of whom themselves had diplomatic representatives in Lhasa (van Walt van Praag 1987).[32] The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), by contrast, claims that this period was marked by a continuation of Chinese rule under the new Nationalist Government (People's Republic of China 1992).

Underpinning these divergent histories presented by Beijing and Dharamsala are important ambiguities surrounding issues of sovereignty, territory and colonial prerogatives. Indeed, in many ways the history of this region is a colonial history, albeit a colonialism which, carried out by non-white colonisers, is rarely recognised by Western states (see Chapter 2). With regards to twentieth-century Tibetan history, TGiE has, through policy reports in recent years, claimed not only that the events of 1949-1950 were a colonial occupation of Tibet by China, but that Chinese development policies in the region since have been framed in distinctly colonial discourses (DIIR 2001a; Fischer 2002). With regards to issues of territory, whilst the territorial extent of the Tibetan empire waxed and waned across central Asia over the centuries, each side in this dispute implies a different territorial area when they refer to 'Tibet' (see Figure 3.a). From the Tibetan perspective 'Tibet' consists of the three traditional provinces of Ü-Tsang, Amdo and Kham. This is the region with a traditionally majority ethnic Tibetan population, and is the interpretation used in this study (the symbolic importance of this reading of Tibetan territory will be discussed in Chapter 8). However, this 'greater Tibet' was far from a politically homogenous territory. In the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries the Tibetan Government's tax-levying capacity extended only to Ü-Tsang province, with Kham and Amdo perceiving Lhasa as a cultural and religious centre rather than a political one and maintaining a degree of political autonomy. As will become apparent in this study, these regional divisions have important ongoing repercussions for exile politics. In contrast to this Tibetan interpretation, Chinese authorities use the term 'Tibet' to refer only to the 'Tibetan Autonomous Region', a province-level autonomous region of the PRC created in 1965 which corresponds only to Ü-Tsang and part of Western Kham. Amdo and remaining regions of Kham were subsumed within the expanded borders of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan provinces, with the ethnically Tibetan areas designated as 'Tibetan prefectures' (Figure 3.a).

[32] These countries included British India, Bhutan, Sikkim and, to a limited extent, Russia and Japan.

Figure 3.a: Map of Tibet showing both traditional Tibetan regions and Chinese provinces (DIIR 2000a: ix)



With regards to issues of sovereignty, the ongoing, conflicting and often ambiguous interpretations of political authority in this region have proved a major barrier to resolving the Tibet issue. As indicated above, the diverging views of Beijing and Dharamsala rest in their interpretations of history as the basis of claims to sovereignty in the region. In general, China's claims to Tibet are based on its understanding of pre-twentieth-century imperial Chinese history, whilst TGiE has focused attention on Tibet's early twentieth-century history and the Tibetan people's desire for, and recognised right to, self-determination (Dulaney *et al* 1998). Moreover, the legal and socio-cultural concepts used to describe political authority during these periods – Chinese notions of imperial vassalage and Tibetan notions of religious patronage (*chöyon*) – not only confused the neighbouring colonial powers of Britain and Russia in the nineteenth-century, but, crucially, failed to translate into the modern framework of international law and statehood (Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Tibet 2008). Indeed, they also fail to equate with each other, leading to the disputed claims and counter-histories presented above.

Further confusing the legal and political status of this territory was the British declaration of Chinese 'suzerainty' over Tibet. In an effort to settle on-going disputes over the Sino-Tibetan border and come to some resolution as to the political status of Tibet, Britain convened a tripartite British, Tibetan and Chinese conference in the Indian hill-station of Shimla in 1914.[33] Under the Shimla Convention, Britain – informed by its own lack of desire for an independent Tibet, but lack of wish for full Chinese sovereignty in the region (Strong 1912) – denoted two distinct areas to Tibet: 'Inner Tibet' (Kham and Amdo), which came under direct Chinese sovereignty but over which the Dalai Lama maintained religious authority; and 'Outer Tibet' (roughly coterminous with the modern Tibetan Autonomous Region) whose governmental system was dominated by the Dalai Lama's government at Lhasa, but over which China maintained a nominal 'suzerainty' (Oberoi 2006: 78). On the one hand, this declaration of suzerainty – a pre-World War II diplomatic practice which describes a region as being under protectorate relations of a more powerful state, although never fully subsumed by that state – can be read as a distinctly Western interpretation of this non-Western situation (Anand 2004. See also Strang 1996). Alternatively, this rendition of Tibet's status, which remained official British policy until October 2008,[34] can be seen as a compromise position between Chinese claims of sovereignty over Tibet and Tibetan claims of independence. However, a third perspective perceives suzerainty as a concept which fails to fit with contemporary theories of international law in which there is no space for overlapping territorial jurisdictions and where sovereignty either exists or does not (Anand 2006).

3.2.2 India and Tibet: ambiguities and geopolitical strategising

With regards to India's position vis-à-vis the legal status of Tibet, in the initial years after Indian independence in 1947, Nehru followed the British government policy in treating Tibet as a de facto independent state (Kharat 2003a: 314).[35] In line with such a position, whilst declining Lhasa's request for troops in 1949 due to its ill-equipped and fledgling army, India did not hesitate to deplore China's 'invasion' of Tibet (Mehrotra 2000). However, through a series of diplomatic

[33] Tibet entered the Shimla Convention as an "independent nation" – a point regularly cited by TGiE as verification of Tibet's independent status.

[34] In a short statement published on his Ministry's website the Foreign Secretary, David Milliband, asserted that the concept of suzerainty was 'based on the geopolitics of the time' and was thus outdated and misleading. Therefore, whilst the British government continues to call for greater autonomy for the Tibetans, it regards Tibet as part of the PRC (*The Economist* 6 November 2008: 64).

[35] Cited as evidence of such a stance is the first communication from the Government of independent India to the Foreign Office of the Tibetan Government – a request for the latter to ratify the 1914 Shimla Convention – which assumes Tibet had relations with other states on an equal footing (Mehrotra 2000: 14-15).

exchanges between 1950 and 1953 (including demoting the Indian Political Officer in Lhasa to the position of Consul General) and statements to the Indian parliament, Nehru's terminology regarding Tibet changed significantly. No longer recognising Tibet as an autonomous state, India now regarded it as a province of China, a shift that was in direct contravention of the Shimla Convention (Arpi 2000). This stance was confirmed through the signing of the 'Panchsheel Agreement' between China and India on 29th April 1954, whereby India agreed to relinquish its extra-territorial rights in Tibet inherited from the British, and recognised China's sovereignty over Tibet. In examining what prompted such a shift in the Indian position on Tibet, Chaturvedi argues that Nehru, in attempting to position India as spearheading a postcolonial intervention into Western dominated international affairs, saw China not only as a large and powerful neighbour which needed to be placated, but as representing key ally 'destined to lead the emancipation of hitherto dependent Afro-Asian countries' (2004: 79). However, such optimism was premature and misplaced as, with the 1962 Chinese invasion of North-East India and the ensuing Indo-Chinese border war, China violated the principles of the Panchsheel Agreement and it is only through increasing economic interactions in recent years that Sino-Indian diplomatic relations have begun to be 'normalised' (Mehrotra 2000: 65). Yet, despite these shifting Sino-Indian relations, India's position on Tibet has remained unchanged and India neither interferes nor assists TGiE in its dialogue with Beijing (Rajya Sabha debate, 25 March 1983, TPPRC 2006b: 88).

3.2.3 The situation today: competing claims of sovereignty, autonomy and independence

Notable from the above discussion is the sheer number of terms used to describe the nature of political authority that has been exercised over Tibet and to frame claims over this territory. This continues today, with a range of international legal discourses and concepts being appropriated and marshalled by the various sides. The Chinese continue to claim sovereignty over Tibet, and most states officially recognise such sovereignty. Meanwhile, the official stance of the UN, as codified in the General Assembly's three resolutions on Tibet (resolutions 1353, 1723 and 2079 passed in 1959, 1961 and 1965 respectively) has been to call for the respect of the fundamental human rights of the Tibetan peoples and the recognition of their right to self-determination. From the Tibetan perspective, opinions regarding the future of the homeland are sharply divided. In September 1987, after sending four fact-finding expeditions to Tibet and engaging in two rounds of exploratory talks with

the Chinese leadership in Beijing, the Dalai Lama presented his 'Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet' to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus.[36] Nine months later, His Holiness announced his 'Framework for Sino-Tibetan Negotiations' at Strasbourg whereby he formally renounced Dharamsala's previous demands for independence. Forming the basis of the 'Middle Way Approach', this framework is in effect a compact in which China would accede to genuine Tibetan autonomy within Tibet without compromising China's borders, security or geostrategic posture (Lafitte 1999), and has been the TGiE's official policy to this day.[37] However, both the Five Point Peace Plan and the Strasbourg Proposal were rejected by the Chinese leadership in 1990 (Zhou 1990) and, despite eight rounds of Sino-Tibetan dialogue since 2002, no tangible agreements have been reached.

Many Tibetans however strongly disagree with the Dalai Lama's request for a political status less than independence and are increasingly frustrated with the lack of political progress. They call instead for *rangzen* or full Tibetan independence (Tsundue 2004; Norbu 2007).[38] Such a stance is articulated most strongly by Tibetan NGOs in exile such as the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), and was boosted by Tibetans inside Tibet demanding *rangzen* during the protests of 2008 (Reuters 13 March 2008).[39] As the most controversial political issue facing the Tibetan community, this split in visions for the future of the homeland is a defining feature of exile politics and, as explored in the following chapters, permeates many aspects of exile life.

3.3 Tibet in exile: the TGiE and Tibetan diaspora

Shifting attention to the (re)establishment of key aspects of Tibetan cultural, religious and political life outside the homeland, I want to outline here four important contexts. Firstly the development and institutional structures of TGiE itself, secondly the role of the Dalai Lama and relationship between religion and politics in this case, thirdly TGiE's negotiation of relations with India and the West

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[36] The Peace Plan proposed the transformation of the Tibetan Plateau into a de-militarised 'zone of peace', the abandonment of China's population transfer policy to Tibet, respect for Tibetans' fundamental human rights, and commencement of earnest negotiations on Tibet's future status.

[37] This strategy gave rise to two important tasks within the exile community. Firstly, in order to clearly define what kind of autonomy it was proposing for Tibet, TGiE has conducted research into autonomous regions around the world (Herzer 2001). Secondly, TGiE has sought to educate the Tibetan community on the issue of autonomy through an ongoing series of workshops across the diaspora.

[38] The word *'rangzen'* was introduced into the Tibetan lexicon in exile and was coined by combining *'rang'* meaning self and *'btsan'* meaning power (Nowak 1978: 187).

[39] Although persevering with his Middle Way Approach, the Dalai Lama has recently shown signs of frustration with the Chinese authorities (*The Economist* 6 November 2008: 64).

through practices of paradiplomacy and finally a demographic overview of the exile diaspora.

3.3.1 The Government of Tibet and TGiE: an historical and institutional overview

In the first half of the twentieth-century, Tibetans were ruled by an unusual form of feudal theocracy (Kharat 2003b). A central government in Lhasa was headed by the Dalai Lama and administered by the *Tsongdu*, a national assembly which consisted of religious and lay-representatives (TPPRC 2003: 14). This government maintained a military force, issued currency and postage stamps, collected taxes, was the final source of adjudication and negotiated with other governments (Mehrotra 2000). In terms of governing the vast territory of Tibet, a complex decentralised bureaucracy was in place which gave local control to numerous monastic and aristocratic estates which, functioning as government offices, collected taxes and settled disputes.

In October 1950, 40,000 troops from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Chamdo in Eastern Tibet and, after 12 days, defeated the 8,000 strong Tibetan army. The *Tsongdu* convened an emergency meeting in November to request the 14th Dalai Lama, then only 15 years old, to assume full political authority as head of state of Tibet. However, by 1951 China had declared Tibet's 'peaceful liberation'. The so-called 'Seventeen-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet' affirming Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was signed between Chinese and Tibetan officials in May 1951 and, whilst the Chinese regard this as a legal document, Tibetan authorities consider it as having been signed under duress and therefore invalid (Powers 2004). By 1959, growing popular resentment to Chinese rule culminated in an open revolt in Lhasa and, beginning on 10th March of that year, daily protests were held in the capital. The PLA crushed the revolt, killing around 90,000 Tibetans and imprisoning many thousands. A week later, the Dalai Lama, most of his senior government officials and over 80,000 Tibetans fled the capital and crossed the Himalayas to seek refuge in India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Upon his arrival in India in March 1959, the Dalai Lama announced the formation of an exile government, declaring 'Wherever I am, accompanied by my government, the Tibetan people recognise us as the Government of Tibet' (cited in Dulaney *et al* 1998: 11). As such, the TGiE is effectively the continuation in exile of the Lhasa-based Tibetan Government. After a brief stay in the North Indian town of

Mussouri, and in consultation with the Indian authorities, this nascent exile administration was established in Dharamsala – a hill-station in Himachal Pradesh – in April 1960. On 2nd September 1960, the Dalai Lama called the first democratic elections for a newly created representative body, the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies and, a year later, tasked his officials with devising a Tibetan constitution based on democratic principles. Officially adopted on 10th March 1963, and closely following the Indian model, this 'Constitution of Tibet' was the first written constitution in Tibetan history (Sangay 2003).[40] Combining Western concepts of parliamentary and popular democracy with principles of Tibetan Buddhism, and renouncing force as an instrument of national policy, the Constitution documents democratic reforms which would serve as a guideline and a basis for a future Tibet. However, whilst the Constitution can only be finalised after consulting the wishes of all Tibetan people and is thus a provisional document for exile, it nevertheless set out the structures for TGiE and most of its directives have since become a working reality (see Chapter 8).

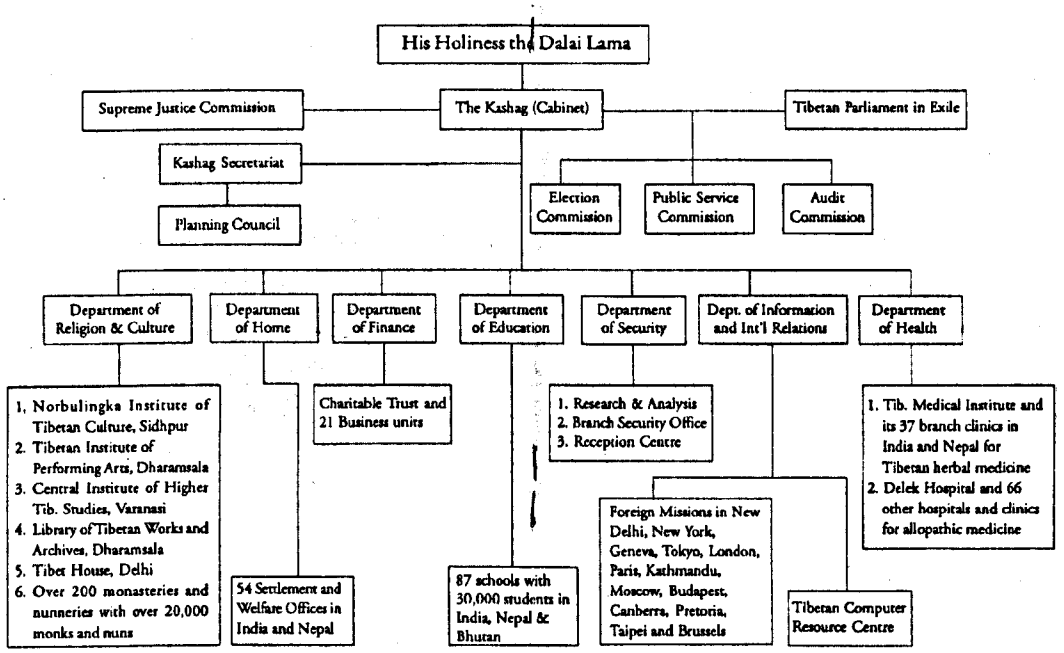
The TGiE was gradually expanded, developed and institutionalised over the decades through a series of governmental reforms which reorganised the administration according to democratic principles. A key milestone in this process was reached with the promulgation of the 'Charter of Tibetans in Exile' on 14th June 1991. A revision of the 1963 Constitution, the Charter was specifically designed for the interim exile situation, is effectively the supreme law governing TGiE and is binding on all Tibetans under the jurisdiction of the government-in-exile (Tsomo 2004). As with constitutions of conventional states, the 1963 Constitution and 1991 Charter offer a valuable insight into both the political culture of the exile Tibetan polity and the formal rules by which this polity is organised, outlining the main institutions of the 'state', and enshrining the rights and obligations that formalise the relationship between political authority and the people. Moreover, whilst the 1963 Constitution in particular is an idealistic document which has yet to be implemented, its very existence is significant in positioning TGiE within international norms and discourses of statehood.

With regards to the functioning of TGiE, the 1991 Charter provides for a system of government not unlike a constitutional monarchy, with the Dalai Lama as the

[40] The administration in the pre-Chinese occupation Tibet was guided by 'custom and usage' in the absence of a written constitution which included 16 general moral principles' laid down by Tibetan King Srongtsen Gampo (Subramanya 2004: 48, 51).

head of state and a separation of powers among three branches of government (see Figure 3.b). As such, with some 3,500 full-time government employees (Sangay 2003: 120) and no credible contenders for political authority within the exile community, TGiE claims to function 'as a veritable government and has all the departments and attributes of a free democratic government' (www.tibet.net). The TGiE frames this modernising of existing Tibetan institutions and structures of governance and the development of new ones, in terms of both preserving in exile what was destroyed by the Chinese occupation, and as preparation for governance in a future independent or genuinely autonomous Tibet (Planning Council 1994, Section 9.1.1). These temporal discourses will form an important theme running through the following chapters.

Figure 3.b: Organisational structure of the TGiE (DIIR 2001b: 10–11)



As the highest executing organ of TGiE, the *Kashag* makes policy decisions, in consultation with the Dalai Lama, on matters relating to the Tibetan refugee community and has the main responsibility of trying to keep the question of Tibet alive (Planning Council 1994, Section 1.2.3). *Kalons* (ministers) were initially appointed by the Dalai Lama but the 1991 Charter ruled that these individuals be elected by the exile parliament. Since 2001 the *Kalon Tripa* (Prime Minister) has been directly elected by the diaspora. Previously chairman of the exile parliament, the current *Kalon Tripa* Samdhong Rimpoche is known in India as the 'Tibetan Gandhi' for his espousal of the principles of *ahimsa* (non-violent resistance) and

satyagraha or 'insistence on truth' (Ardley 2003a). Indeed, Samdhong Rimpoche's administrations have placed such values at the core of TGiE's political philosophy, a strategy which has important repercussions for the functioning of this polity (see Chapters 5, 6 and 8).

The exile legislature was established as the Commission of Tibetan People's Deputies in 1960 with 13 members and the present Tibetan Parliament-in-exile (TPiE) has 43 directly elected members representing the three provincial regions and five major religious sects of Tibet (see Chapter 8). The TPiE has broad legislative powers and responsibilities which include electing members of the *Kashag*, overseeing the work of TGiE departments, enacting laws, issuing policy decisions and managing the TGiE's finances. In session in March and September each year, the TPiE also hears public grievances and petitions of Tibetans in exile, liaises with parliaments and NGOs across the world to gain backing for the cause of Tibet and lobbies for support from the Government and people of India (Tsomo 2004). The third pillar of TGiE's democratic structure is the Tibetan Supreme Justice Commission established in 1992 under the Charter of Tibetans in Exile. This 'judiciary' is responsible for framing a judicial code and civil procedures appropriate to the situation of exile but, given its limited functioning within the state of India, is only able to settle civil disputes between exile Tibetans in accordance with arbitrational procedures. Meanwhile all criminal cases are dealt with by the Indian judicial system (see Chapter 5). Finally, three independent statutory commissions reaffirm the democratic status of TGiE. These are the Election Commission, which conducts and oversees elections to TPiE and Local Assemblies and the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa* (see Chapter 8); the Public Service Commission which recruits and trains Tibetan civil servants; and the Audit Commission which appraises the accounts of all TGiE departments and Tibetan public institution and advises Tibetan institutions and businesses on Indian tax issues.

With regards to the governmental departments, the Department of Religion and Culture oversees the preservation of the religious and cultural heritage of Tibet through assisting the re-establishment of almost 200 monasteries and nunneries in India, Nepal and Bhutan, producing religious and cultural publications and administering a number of Tibetan cultural institutions (for example the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts and the Norbulinka institute for traditional arts and crafts near Dharamsala). The Department of Home is responsible for managing the

Tibetan settlements, scattered communities, handicraft centres and agricultural cooperatives in exile (see Chapter 5), while the Department of Finance formulates TGiE's annual budget, administers financial donations to the exile government and collects annual 'voluntary contributions' from exile Tibetans (see Chapter 6). As one of the first departments established in exile, the Department of Education is responsible for overseeing 85 Tibetan schools in India, and Nepal, devising Tibetan curricula and publishing Tibetan textbooks (see Chapter 5), while the Department of Health runs primary health centres and Tibetan medicine centres in almost all the exile settlements, administers seven hospitals and develops public health policies. Meanwhile, the duties of the Department of Security include ensuring the personal security of the Dalai Lama and providing assistance for Tibetans acquiring and renewing their Indian 'Registration Certificates' (see Chapter 7). Finally, the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) acts as the TGiE's protocol office, disseminating information about Tibet, monitoring human rights and environmental issues in Tibet and liaising with international Tibetan Support Groups (TSGs).

Besides the official organs of the state, the Tibetan community in exile has also seen the development of institutions of civil society (see Chapters 6 and 8). Numerous NGOs have been established across the diaspora to deal with a vast array of issues, from campaigning for the future of the homeland to providing health and education services, supporting women, former political prisoners, and refugees from particular regions in Tibet and raising awareness of environmental issues. The most prominent NGOs include the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) and the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). Exile Tibetan media has also grown over the years, now consisting of at least six Tibetan and four English language publications. These newspapers and magazines, alongside radio services such as Radio Free Asia and Voice of Tibet have encouraged often heated political debate within the exile community, thereby 'contributing to the building of a Tibetan civil society [and] strengthening... the roots of the exiles' nascent democracy' (Samphel 2004: 170).[41] Meanwhile, web-based media and web-forums such as www.phayul.com have brought the internationally dispersed diaspora together.

[41] The launch of the Tibetan service radio in particular gave Tibetan exiles the ability to reach out to Tibetans in Tibet, which has proved to be a powerful unifying and nation-building tool (Samphel 2004: 179).

3.3.2 Combining religion and politics: monasteries in exile and the role of the Dalai Lama

Readily apparent from this overview of TGiE is the centrality of the relationship between religion and politics in this case and the key role played by the Dalai Lama. Indeed, the gradual shift from religious power to secular (democratic) power and the constantly negotiated relationship between religion and politics is central to attempting to understand Tibetan political culture. To set some context, Buddhism was first brought to Tibet in the seventh-century by Songtsen Gampo, the Tibetan King who consolidated and expanded the Tibetan empire and, under the following Tibetan Kings, Buddhism became established as the state religion.[42] Between the seventeenth-century and 1959, the Dalai Lamas – a lineage of religious leaders of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism – were both the religious and political leaders of Tibet, heading the Lhasa based Tibetan Government. As such, religion and politics were intimately connected in Tibet, with the government constituted of a diarchy of equivalent ecclesiastical and secular offices at every level of administration (Klieger 1992).

In exile, both religion and the figure of the Dalai Lama continue to be central and unifying elements in the diasporic community. Indeed, Harris (1997) asserts that the potency of religion as a pan-Tibetan definer is even more marked in exile than pre-1959 Tibet, as refugees from all parts of Tibet have been brought together for the first time. As the personification of *Chenresdzig,* the protector deity of Tibet, the role of the current Dalai Lama in defining Tibetanness, embodying Tibetan culture and providing continuity to the history of Tibet cannot be overemphasised (Kolås 1996). Functioning 'as the central locus of power and identity within the Tibetan diaspora' (Houston and Wright 2003: 218) the Dalai Lama's unique position as spiritual and secular leader is 'the one institution perhaps which forges together all Tibetans, whether in Tibet or in exile, into one united people' (Office of The Dalai Lama 1969: i). With regards to monasteries, these remain vital institutions in the exile community with one or more in each exile settlement. Indeed, Tibetan Buddhism has both been preserved and advanced to a far greater extent in India than inside Tibet as, due to the destruction of thousands of Tibetan monasteries during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and ongoing repression of Buddhist teachings, most senior Tibetan lamas have fled to exile and established exile 'institutions' of the major monasteries in Tibet.

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[42] Whilst Tibet was and is an overwhelmingly a Buddhist society, there is a small Tibetan Muslim population, now predominantly in exile. Based mainly in Kashmir, this community receives some welfare support from TGiE but is largely independent (Siddiqui 1991; Mondal 2001)

However, whilst Buddhism and the Dalai Lama continue to be central to the diasporic Tibetan community, this polity is not a theocracy and the relationship between church and state has altered somewhat in exile. On the one hand, 'the doctrines enunciated by the Lord Buddha' (His Holiness the Dalai Lama 1963: v) are at the core of the 1963 Constitution and 1991 Charter, and the exile elite assert that their unique form and system of democracy is shaped by and thus in tune with Tibetan Buddhist values (see Chapter 8). Indeed, himself a reincarnate lama, the current *Kalon Tripa* Samdhong Rimpoche's doctrine of *satyagraha* and the TGiE's 'Middle Way Approach' more generally are further evidence of a polity infused with religious ethics and ideals. As explored in the following chapters, this is a political philosophy which some amongst the secular-educated population in exile are increasingly frustrated with, especially when it is perceived to obstruct the nationalist freedom struggle.

On the other hand, although seats are reserved for representatives of the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism (Gelugpa, Nyingma, Kagyu and Sakya) and the traditional faith Bön, the first exile Tibetan Parliament saw the abolition of dual posts for monk and lay officials. Moreover, the 1991 Charter described the Tibetan polity as 'secular' albeit defined in Tibetan as *remey* meaning that the state will not discriminate among different religions, rather than the absence of religion (Shiromany 1998: 272). Likewise, despite their important function within the exile communities, the political role, position and material impact of Tibetan monasteries has undergone important changes (Kolås 1996). Not only have the governmental monastic offices been abolished, but the monasteries themselves have lost the key economic and political foundation they had in Tibet as landholders, tax collectors and local political administrators. Therefore, rather than forming a core part of the government structure, monasteries are now largely autonomous institutions which come under the remit of a single TGiE department which itself now handles all state-level religious matters.[43]

[43] Though uniting the various sects of Tibetan Buddhism is an aspirational goal in exile, and certainly all modern sects acknowledge the Dalai Lama as the leader of Tibet, traditional divisions and power struggles have been transferred to exile. For example, intrinsically linked to the Tibetan government through the lineage of Dalai Lamas, the Gelugpa sect received direct payment from Lhasa, a practice which continued in exile with Gelugpa monks receiving a small annual allowance from TGiE. Without such a source of income, other sects looked abroad for financial support, often establishing Buddhist institutions in the West (Klieger 1992). Such a strategy proved highly successful and, today, Nyingma and Kagyu monasteries in India are often better funded than their Gelugpa counterparts.

Finally, the Dalai Lama has, over the decades, attempted to reduce his political role within the community through devolving political authority to the directly elected *Kalon Tripa* and TPiE (see Chapter 8). Not only is this a deliberate strategy to separate religious and political leadership in the Tibetan polity, but it is also an important attempt to prevent a power vacuum after his death. Traditionally, the death of a Dalai Lama leads to a search for a reincarnation, with Regents temporarily taking political power until the next Dalai Lama is found and has reached the age of 18. In these interim periods, Tibet has historically suffered political instability and national crises and so the existence of a democratically elected political leader should, in theory, be able to circumvent such problems. However, concerns about a post-Dalai Lama future remain significant in the exile community, both in terms of considerable continued dependence on the institution of the Dalai Lama and what the loss of such a charismatic leader would do to the international standing of the Tibetan cause (Tsundue 2004).

3.3.3 TGiE's relations with India and the West: (non)recognition and paradiplomacy

One area of particular concern regarding the future of the exile community is its relationship with the host state India. Whilst the nature of this relationship will emerge in the following empirical chapters and be analysed in Chapter 9, I want to outline here some of the important background factors and issues. On the one hand India has been an extraordinarily generous and tolerant host, and exile Tibetans have been grateful and largely obedient guests.[44] Such a relationship is founded on the basis of a long-standing spiritual and cultural connections between Tibet and India (French 1991), the high regard with which the Dalai Lama is held by the Indian public and government, and the fact that Tibetans are largely seen as model refugees (Fürer-Haimendorf 1990; Diehl 1997). However, despite such hospitality, India has never afforded TGiE formal legal or political recognition as a government, nor the Dalai Lama the status of a legitimate political leader (Grunfeld 1987).[45] In addition, India has abstained from voting on the resolutions concerning Tibet that were put forward in the UN General Assembly in 1959 and 1961 (Oberoi 2006: 86). Yet, at the same time, the GoI granted asylum to the Dalai Lama, accepts his leadership over the exile community, and grants TGiE tacit approval to speak for the Tibetan refugees, manage the exile settlements and engage with international donor agencies.

[44] For example, in March 2009 TGiE hosted a 'Thank You India' festival in New Delhi dedicated to 'the generosity and hospitality of the government and the people of India' (www.50yrsinexile.com).
[45] It should be noted that there has been considerable Indian public support for such recognition, especially after the 1962 Sino-Indian war (Norbu 2001: 12).

Such a contradictory position has to be seen through the lens of geopolitical strategising. Historically perceived as an important and peaceful buffer zone between India and China, Tibet has increasingly become a major security concern for India, especially with the increased Chinese militarisation of the region and the advance of Chinese forces in the Himalayan borders in recent years (Mehrotra 2000). As such, the Indian Government has used the presence of TGiE on its territory as a bargaining chip to regulate its relations with Beijing, officially prohibiting but often unofficially permitting Tibetan's anti-Chinese protests on Indian soil (Norbu 1996). Finally, on cultural and social levels the relationship between TGiE and GoI has in many ways been mutually beneficial. As outlined in the following chapters, TGiE has relied on Indian political and fiscal expertise for the development of its constitution, election system, implementation of its census and training of its civil servants (Planning Council 1994, Section 9.5.1). In turn, the presence of the Tibetan exile community and its numerous successful institutions has instigated a cultural and religious revival in India's Buddhist Himalayan regions and contributed significantly to India's tourism economy.

Considering TGiE's 'international relations' more generally, as noted in the previous chapter, although this polity is not legally recognised as a government by any state such non-recognition does not mean that TGiE lacks all contact with other states and governments. Since coming into exile, the issue of Tibet has been internationalised both by the charismatic figure of the Dalai Lama and the growing international network of TSGs.[46] However, whilst engagement with cultural, humanitarian, and religious organisations which share and support the exile community's goals is central to how TGiE positions itself on the international stage and indeed secures much needed funding (Dulaney *et al* 1998. see also Shain 1989), the exile administration has also engaged in a range of distinctly state-like (para)diplomatic practices.

Central to these is the administration of a series of pseudo embassies. Coming under the jurisdiction of the DIIR, in effect TGiE's foreign office (*chhisee khang*), there are ten such 'Offices of Tibet' established in cities across all continents (in New Delhi, New York, Geneva, Tokyo, London, Canberra, Brussels, Moscow, Pretoria and Taipei). Although their diplomatic activities are restricted, the Offices

[46] An umbrella organisation, the 'International Tibet Support Network' was launched in 2000 in order to coordinate the now 150 TSG's in over 30 countries (www.tibetnetwork.org).

of Tibet nonetheless maintain direct contacts with governments and NGOs, spearhead the administration's UN initiatives and function as a channel of news from Tibet. Given budgetary constraints, each of these Offices was established with clear strategic goals. For example, the Bureau in New Delhi liaises directly with a number of central GoI Ministries and assists in the processing of documents of Tibetans going to and from India (see Chapter 6). Established in 1960, the New York office provides support to TGiE officials lobbying the UN and serves as the focal point for the increasing number of Tibetans settled in North America. Similarly, the Office of Tibet in Brussels liaises with sympathetic parliamentarians in the European Union and the office in Geneva lobbies the UN Human Rights commission and supports the sizeable Tibetan population in Switzerland. Alongside these foreign missions and their diplomats, other paradiplomatic practices include engagement in alternative international fora such as the Unrecognised Nations and Peoples Organisation,[47] parliamentary exchanges – visits of parliamentarians to Dharamsala and tours of Tibetan MPs to European parliaments[48] – and a series of 'World Parliamentarian Conventions on Tibet'.[49] With the objective of garnering international governmental support for TGiE's proposed resolution of the issue of Tibet, these events are key examples of TGiE's performance of legitimate statehood on the international stage.

3.3.4 Tibetans in exile: refugee displacements, demographics and diaspora

Finally, I want to turn attention to the Tibetan population in exile. Whilst a small permanent Tibetan minority became assimilated into the Himalayan regions of India in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, emigration from Tibet to India prior to the 1950s was generally limited to seasonal traders, religious pilgrims and the children of the aristocracy sent to British missionary schools in Darjeeling and Kalimpong (Grunfeld 1987: 185). This situation changed dramatically in March 1959 with the arrival of the Dalai Lama and around 80,000 Tibetans. These first 'Tibetan refugees' (a term which will be interrogated in Chapter 7), came from all regions of Tibet and from a variety of socio-economic

[47] This is a membership organisation of political communities such as stateless nations and indigenous groups not adequately represented at major international fora (such as the United Nations) which provides a forum through which they can become effective participants and contributors to the international community (www.unpo.org).

[48] The most recent of these trips was a delegation of four Tibetan MPs to Westminster in June 2009. This included meetings with the Home Office and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet to discuss the current situation in Tibet and the development of democracy in exile.

[49] The first convention was held in New Delhi in 1994, the second in 1995 in Vilnius in Lithuania, the third in April 1997 in Washington, DC and the most recent in Edinburgh in 2005 which I attended as an observer. The number of parliamentarians attending and the number of countries represented has increased at each meeting, from 69 parliamentarians from 25 countries in 1994 to 130 parliamentarians from 40 countries in 2005.

backgrounds (MacPherson *et al* 2008). After the peak years of exodus from 1959 to 1961, the borders of Tibet were effectively closed and the political isolation of China meant that there was 'little contact between Tibetans inside Tibet and the refugee community for more than two decades' (Yeh 2007: 652).

The second wave of refugees from Tibet began in the 1980s, with 25,000 Tibetans arriving in India between 1986 and 1996 as a result of reforms in China following the death of Mao and the gradual loosening of travel restrictions imposed on Tibetans (Moynihan 1997). Members of this second exodus – 'new arrivals' or 'newcomers' as they are referred to – left for a variety of reasons including religious persecution, political repression, aggressive sinocisation and a lack of educational opportunities (Hess 2006). An estimated 2000–3000 Tibetans left illegally for India every year from the late 1990s until 2008, with increasing numbers of children sent by their parents for a Tibetan education in India, young people seeking better education and employment opportunities and individuals visiting family members in exile (Yeh 2007). Since the protests across Tibet in March 2008 the flow of Tibetan refugees from Tibet to India via Nepal has all but stopped due to stringent border controls (MacPherson *et al* 2008). The principle escape route was, and continues to be, an arduous and dangerous journey of one to three months across the Himalayas on foot to Nepal (Ziman 1996). After registering with the UNHCR Office in Kathmandu, most refugees travel to Dharamsala where TGiE arranges an audience with the Dalai Lama, provides short-term accommodation and organises placements in Tibetan religious and educational institutions (see Chapters 5 and 6). For several years, TGiE has encouraged those coming to India on pilgrimage or to study to return to Tibet to maintain the Tibetan population in the homeland in the face of increasing Chinese migration.

With regards to the Tibetan diaspora, the Tibetan Demographic Survey conducted in 1998 (see Chapter 6) recorded 122,078 Tibetans in exile, with 70% residing in India (Figure 3.c):

Figure 3.c Population figures for the Tibetan diaspora (Planning Council 2000: 38)

India	85,000
Nepal	14,000
Bhutan	1,600
Taiwan	1,000
Switzerland	1,540
Rest of Europe	750

USA and Canada	7,000
Australia and New Zealand	220

The majority of exile Tibetans are from Ü-Tsang province (70%), with 25% originating from Kham and 5% from Amdo (Kharat 2003b: 79). Within India, Tibetan refugees are concentrated in Karnataka (35,002), Himachal Pradesh (19,593), Arunachal Pradesh (6,858), Uttar Pradesh (6,300) and Jammu and Kashmir (6,242) (Planning Council 2000: 34-37. See Chapter 5). As Bhatia *et al* (2002) note in a demographic study of 65,000 Tibetans in India in 1995, the declining birth rate, increasing life expectancies, and growth in the proportion of the elderly population all indicate a transition to the demographic pattern of more middle income societies, an assertion supported by socio-economic trends within the community. This population is also characterised by high mobility within India and abroad, a significant unregistered population (lacking Indian identity documents) and a high proportion of monks and nuns. Due to these demographic characteristics, there is a high dependency ratio and a number of vulnerable cohorts within the Tibetan community.[50] Alongside the elderly, infirm and very young, these include recent exiles who lack family support networks, unemployed graduates, and those living under TGiE's poverty line of 30 Indian Rupees per person per day (see Chapter 6).

The migration of Tibetan refugees from India and Nepal to the West began in the 1960s when the Swiss Red Cross resettled around 1,500 Tibetans in Switzerland, a community which continues to thrive today. The success of this experiment led the Dalai Lama to encourage the Canadian and US governments to accept Tibetan refugees and, in 1971–1972, 228 Tibetans arrived in Canada from India and Nepal (MacPherson *et al* 2008). The large-scale movement of Tibetans from South Asia to the USA occurred after the passage of the 1990 US Immigration Act, with Section 134 of the Act – the Tibetan US Resettlement Program – granting permanent resident status to 1000 'displaced' Tibetans living in India and Nepal (*Tibetan Review* 1991 26(8): 6–7). These individuals, selected through a quota system administered by TGiE, were assigned to resettlement clusters in 18 states and, from 1996, became eligible to bring their families to the US (Hess 2003). Not only did the remittances sent back to India and the high proportion of Tibetan elites migrating encourage further migration to the West, but it has meant that 'the West' has come to be seen in the South Asian exile communities as a surrogate

50 The Tibetan Demographic Survey (1998) calculated the total dependency ratio to be 34.64, although this does not include monks and nuns who are mostly economically inactive (Planning Council 2000).

Shangri-la, diametrically opposed to China (Diehl 2002). Tibetans have also increasingly migrated to other European countries, Taiwan, Japan and Australia, and in many cases have taken citizenship of these states. In these host countries, most Tibetans are in regular contact with Tibetan associations and community organisations (usually with strong links to TGiE) which organise cultural activities, political protests and liaise with local TSGs.

3.4 Conclusion: researching Tibet, the TGiE and Tibetans in exile

A number of the issues described above as context will be critically interrogated in what follows. These include the role of China and the relationship between the exile Tibetan community and its host state India; contested definitions of sovereignty, autonomy and self-determination; the complex intertwining of religion, culture and politics; and issues of population, diaspora and nation-building in exile. However, to round up this brief overview of the case of Tibet I want to focus here on how the territory, population and government of Tibet has been considered in academic literature. In terms of Tibet itself, besides the 'vast data bank of information about the region' collated by missionaries, diplomats, soldiers and travellers in the nineteenth-century (Korom 1997: 2), academic literature has overwhelmingly focused on classical history (Beckwith 1993; McKay 2003) and the evolution of Tibetan Buddhism (Thurman 1995; Mills 2001). The issue of Tibet has remained marginal in IR scholarship, appearing if at all as a 'footnote to the cold war or as a pawn in Sino-Western or Sino-Indian relations' (Anand 2004: 212). Such neglect can be attributed to the conventional focus on strategic interests of major Western powers and the lack of fit of this case with orthodox understandings of territory, statehood and imperial power. What scholarly research there is has focused on documenting the post-1950 occupation history (Shakabpa 1967; Grunfeld 1987; Shakya 1999; Dreyer and Sautman 2005), the legal status of Tibet (van Waalt van Praag 1987; McCorquodale and Oroz 1994; Dulaney *et al* 1998) and the role of the British in Tibet (Fleming 1961; David-Neel 1983).

With regards to literature on the Tibetan community in exile, although the plight of Tibetans commands international attention, this diaspora remains 'relatively understudied and under-theorised' (Houston and Wright 2003: 217). Pioneering research in the 1970s until early 1990s was undertaken by Indian and Western anthropologists and sociologists who conducted in-depth studies of the social

structures and evidence of socio-cultural adaptation within specific Tibetan settlements in exile (see Goldstein 1978; Palakshappa 1978; Arakeri 1980; Patel 1980; Subba 1990). To a large extent, these descriptive studies were premised on the idea that exilic Tibetan identity was only worth studying insofar as it contained traces of 'how things were in the past' (Prost 2006: 235), and as such often overlooked the immediate and concrete problems of exile. In contrast, an increasing body of research undertaken by anthropologists, geographers and Tibetologists is employing a range of critical theoretical approaches to analytically examine the construction and negotiation of Tibetan identity in exile. Forming a new juncture in Tibetan studies, such work has focused on the contested construction of nationalism and Tibetanness (Kolås 1996; Anand 2000), complex diasporic and transnational identities in South Asia and the West (Houston and Wright 2003; Hess 2006; Yeh and Lama 2006), the narrative of refugeehood (de Voe 1981; Garrett 1997) and the reconfiguration of gender relations in exile (Butler 2003).

A second strand of contemporary research, informed by similar theoretical frameworks, has focused on the strategies employed to ensure cultural preservation within the community and the subsequent perceived trade-off between traditionalism and modernity (Nowak 1984). Attending to the influence of India and the West on Tibetan exile cultural productions these studies have examined modern Tibetan art (Harris 1997), music (Diehl 2002) and the commoditisation of Tibetan culture by Westerners and the exiles themselves (Korom 1997; McGukin 1997). Indeed, the interaction of exile Tibetans with 'the West' and 'Westerners' has emerged as an increasingly important research theme. An important aspect of this has examined the exoticisation of Tibet and Tibetans in the Western imagination and forms of Western cultural representation such as films, books and magazines (see Bishop 1989; Dodin and Rather 2001; Anand 2008). Meanwhile, other research has focused on how Tibetan refugees have in turn appropriated and internalised Western representations of the Shangri-la myth in the construction and promotion of a Tibetan nation in exile and soliciting international support (McGukin 1997). Running parallel to this has been a focus on Western involvement in the Tibet freedom movement, with studies focusing on the international networks of Tibet activism (McLagan 1996; Davies 2009).

Whilst continuing to employ critical approaches, this study shifts attention away from identity politics and issues of cultural preservation, and instead focuses on the under-researched issues of the structures, functions and limitations of TGiE

and the relationship between this exile administration and its host state India. Extant research on the characteristics and development of the exile community and government has focused on specific aspects of socio-economic relations and dependence on foreign aid (Norbu 2001; Frechette 2002; Prost 2006), the development of Tibetan democracy (Ardley 2003b; Edin 1992; Frechette 2007) and quantitative demographic studies (Bhatia *et al* 2002; Ruwanpura *et al* 2006). This research speaks to these studies, but also makes an original contribution in placing the institution of the TGiE centre-stage, highlighting the Tibetan perspective on the relationship between TGiE and the state of India (for official narratives of the Indian viewpoint see Mehrotra 2000; Kharat 2003b) and examining the everyday functioning of this polity through ethnographic methodologies. It is to this issue of how the material upon which these discussions are based was sourced, collected and collated that I now turn.

Chapter 4
Observing the 'State'-in-exile: Methodological Approaches to Studying the TGiE.

> *'The prudent social scientist, like the wise investor, must rely on diversification to magnify the strengths, and to offset the weaknesses, of any single instrument... To understand how an institution works – and still more, how different institutions work differently – we must deploy a variety of techniques'*
>
> (Putnam 1993: 12).

4.1 Introduction

In addition to reflecting the nature of this exile polity as sketched out in the previous chapter, the methodologies employed for this research have been developed out of the theoretical approaches outlined in Chapter 2. The decision to take a cultural approach to formal politics, and to situate this research within contemporary critical theorisations of the state, sovereignty and territory, is reflected in the choice of qualitative and ethnographic approaches. 'Epistemologically and methodologically distinct from the more traditional approaches of political scientists and political geographers to conceptualizations of the state' (Mountz 2003: 630), qualitative methodologies enable the state to be perceived as 'a set of social practices' (Painter 1995: 34) and facilitate more revealing insights about power and the geographies of politics (Cook and Crang 1995).

In outlining how I approached researching the form and functioning of TGiE, the first section of this chapter details the research visits to India I undertook and the conventional qualitative social science research methods I employed. These included semi-structured interviews with TGiE and Tibetan NGO officials and a cross-section of Tibetan 'citizens' in six exile settlements, and two focus groups set up to explore specific issues. This section also discusses the recruitment of gatekeepers, the sourcing and textual analysis of documents produced by TGiE and issues regarding language, translation and research ethics. Noting that, whilst forming the primary research material for this project these methodologies were insufficient for getting a handle on the often undeclared articulations of sovereignty in this case, the second section outlines an alternative and supplementary approach to researching this polity. Returning to the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2, it contextualises the shifts from textual analysis to issues of performance and contemporary calls attend to quotidian

geographies and issues of materiality. Drawing on the growing body of literature on ethnographies of the everyday state, my own attempts to examine the mundane practices, objects, people and words through which TGiE is constituted and functions are outlined, and the challenges such an approach raises noted. Turning to issues of researcher positionality, the third section discusses how my involvement in Tibet activism enabled me to gain access to this polity, attempt to mediate power relations in research encounters and 'give back' to the exile community.

4.2 A qualitative approach: researching the TGiE through interviews and focus groups

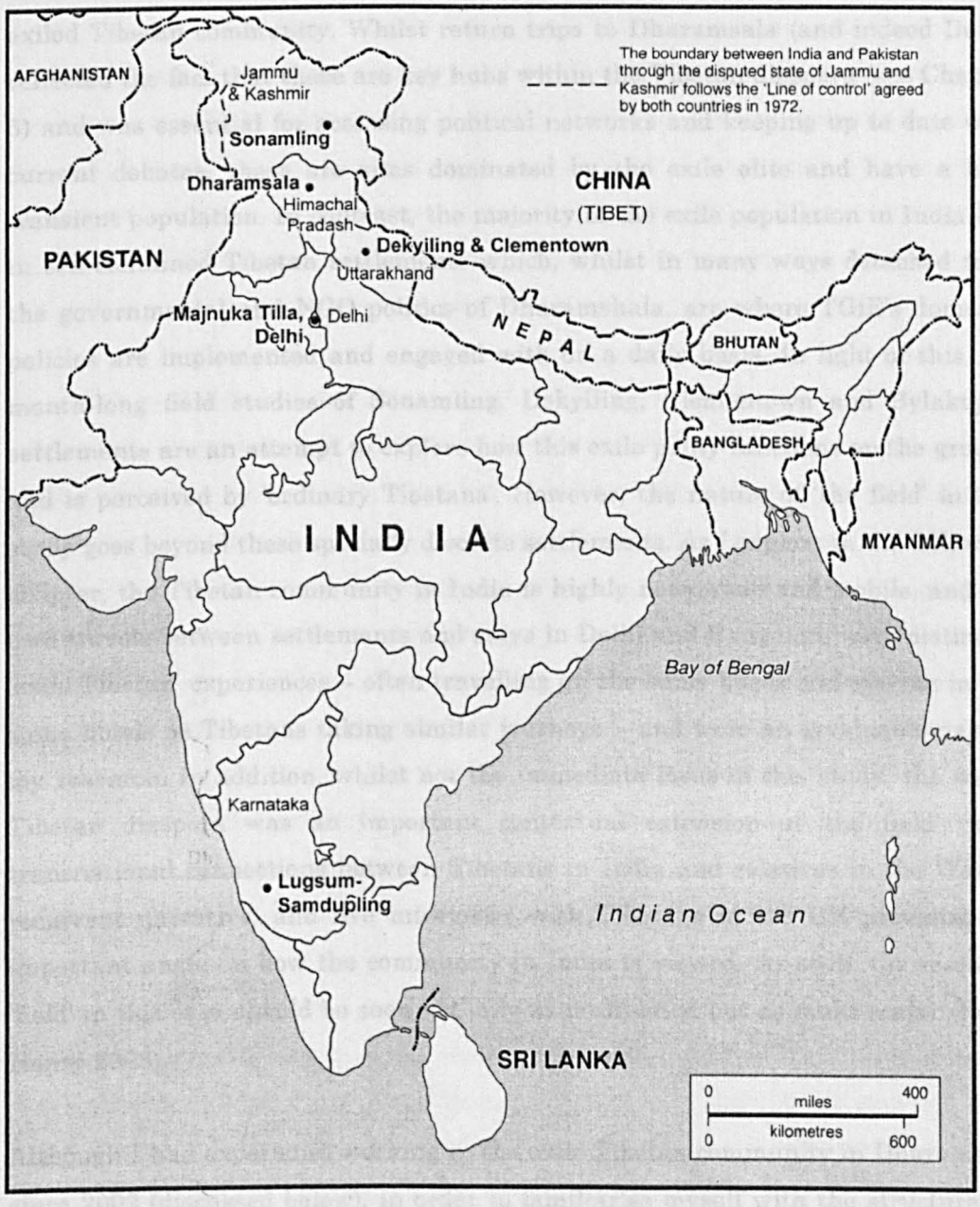
As a result of the timetable of political events within the exile Tibetan community and practical problems obtaining an Indian research visa,[51] three periods of fieldwork totalling just over nine months were undertaken for this research. Whilst having to travel to India on a tourist visa did pose restrictions with regards to interviewing Indian officials (discussed below), multiple trips provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on findings and refine the research agenda after each visit. The first research trip (March–April 2006) was based in Dharamsala and coincided with the Tibetan parliamentary elections and Tibetan national uprising day (10th March). Held every five years, the TPiE elections provided a key opportunity to view the Tibetan state 'in action.' This trip also enabled me to consult TGiE documents and press archives in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala and conduct a series of initial information gathering interviews with key members of the community, a number of whom proved to be important gatekeepers for the subsequent trips. Returning in February 2007 for four months, I re-established research contacts in Dharamsala and interviewed TGiE and NGO officials in the town before undertaking month long visits to the Tibetan settlements and institutions around Dehra Dun, Sonamling settlement in Ladakh and the Tibetan colony of Majnuka Tilla in North Delhi (see Figure 4.a). The rationale behind this choice of settlements is outlined in Chapter 5.[52] The final fieldwork visit (September–December 2007) consisted of conducting follow-up interviews in Dharamsala and an opportunity to sit in on a session of the TPiE,

[51] Despite applying for a research visa in October 2005 and repeated enquiries at the Indian High Commission in London and Ministry of Human Resource Development in New Delhi, no communication, or indeed visa, materialised. From anecdotal evidence and media reports I was not alone in experiencing problems with the Indian research visa system (see Levin 30 May 2007).

[52] It is important to note here that, given the confines of this project, only Tibetan settlements in India were visited, and trips were not made to the exile Tibetan communities in Nepal or Bhutan.

interviews with Tibetan and Indian respondents in South Delhi and a month long stay in Bangalore and Lugsum-Samdupling settlement at Bylakuppe, Karnataka.

Figure 4.a Map of exile Tibetan settlements visited[53]



As noted in the previous chapter, the majority of research on the Tibetan community in India has comprised of detailed studies of the history, development and socio-economic structures of particular settlements. In contrast, my choice to

[53] It is noted that the borders marked on and labels attached to sections of this map are problematic and, in light of discussions in this study, are in many ways emblematic of the conventional approaches representations of political space which are being critiqued.

conduct a multi-sited ethnography – an approach which is increasingly popular in studies of transnationalism (see Marcus 1995; Pratt and Yeoh 2003; Jackson *et al* 2004) – was an attempt to capture and reflect the diversity and complexity of this exile community and state-like polity scattered across the host state India. This was also an attempt to counteract the 'Dharamsala syndrome' prevalent within the exiled Tibetan community. Whilst return trips to Dharamsala (and indeed Delhi) reflected the fact that these are key hubs within the Tibetan diaspora (see Chapter 5) and was essential for accessing political networks and keeping up to date with current debates, these are sites dominated by the exile elite and have a high transient population. In contrast, the majority of the exile population in India live in self-contained Tibetan settlements which, whilst in many ways detached from the governmental and NGO politics of Dharamshala, are where TGiE's domestic policies are implemented and engaged with on a daily basis. In light of this, my month-long field studies of Sonamling, Dekyiling, Clementown and Bylakuppe settlements are an attempt to explore how this exile polity functions on the ground and is perceived by 'ordinary Tibetans'. However, the nature of 'the field' in this study goes beyond these spatially discrete settlements. As I explore in the following chapter, the Tibetan community in India is highly networked and mobile, and my own travels between settlements and stays in Delhi and Bangalore were distinctly 'exile Tibetan' experiences – often travelling on the same buses and staying in the same hotels as Tibetans taking similar journeys – and were an invaluable part of my research. In addition, whilst not the immediate focus of this study, the wider Tibetan diaspora was an important contextual extension of 'the field', with transnational connections between Tibetans in India and relatives in the West a recurrent narrative, and five interviews with Tibetans in the UK providing an important angle on how the community in India is viewed. As such, the research 'field' in this case should be seen not only as multi-sited but as multi-scalar (Reid-Henry 2003).

Although I had experience working in the exile Tibetan community in Dharamsala since 2002 (discussed below), in order to familiarise myself with the structures of TGiE, gauge lexicons and identify potential issues for investigation, initial scoping exercises were undertaken prior to and during the fieldwork periods. This involved consulting reports and data sets produced by TGiE and independent scholars including the Tibetan Demographic Survey (Planning Council 2000), the five-year 'Integrated Development Plans' (Planning Council 1994), the Department of Education's 'Basic Education Policy' (2005), the Charter of Tibetans in Exile (1991),

TGiE press releases, statements by TPiE and *Kashag* (www.tibet.net), socio-economic surveys of the community (Bhatia *et al* 2002; Planning Commission 2004), publications from TGiE departments,[54] reports on the early days of exile (Office of the Dalai Lama 1969) and compendiums of the Dalai Lama's speeches (Shiromany 1998). Tibetan press archives were also consulted,[55] alongside promotional material from Tibetan NGOs and Tibetan websites. The official Indian perspective on the exile government and community was ascertained from Indian parliamentary discussions about Tibet (TPPRC 2006a, 2006b), accounts by former GoI officials and articles in the Indian press.[56] Most of these publications, reports and press archives were accessed through the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamshala.[57] Whilst the majority of the texts were in English I had sections from those published in Tibetan translated.

In addition to being key sources of background historical and statistical information regarding this case, these documents also constitute research data in their own right when approached from the theoretical framework of discourse analysis espoused within critical geopolitics (see Dalby 1991; Campbell 1992; Ó Tuathail 1996). From such a perspective, the 'language of stateness' (Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 9) can be seen as a mechanism through which 'the state' reproduces itself. In light of this, examining what the state stated is as important for aspirant states and governments-in-exile as it is for established nation-states. These texts of governance and their meticulous archiving are vital to the construction of the exile Tibetan polity and, as I discuss in the following chapters, the language used and discourses employed are key to understanding how TGiE defines and presents itself, its relationships with the host state and its place in the world.

In terms of gaining access to the exile community, a series of gatekeepers were contacted through my Tibet campaigning connections in the UK and previous trips to Dharamsala (discussed below). These individuals were indispensible to my

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[54] For example, the bi-annual *Paljor Bulletin* published by the Department of Finance, *Tibetan Health* newsletter produced by the Department of Health and publicity materials from DIIR including the bi-monthly *Tibetan Bulletin*.

[55] Key Tibetan magazines and newspapers include *Tibetan Review*, *Tibetan World Magazine*, *TibeToday* and *Tibet Times* (in Tibetan language).

[56] Over the years each of the major Indian national newspapers have run stories on the Tibetan community and government in exile. These include the *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *Indian Express* and *The Hindu*.

[57] Established in 1970, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives is dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of Tibetan culture and is a repository for Tibetan artefacts and manuscripts and is part funded by GoI.

acceptance into the community, enabling me to establish trust and access hard to reach respondents within the TGiE and in remote settlements (see Herod 1999). They included TGiE officials, NGO workers, activist colleagues and relatives of Tibetan friends in the UK and Dharamsala. In addition to personal introductions, a key 'way in' to the community, particularly in settlements I was visiting for the first time, was a series of introduction letters from the Office of Tibet in London, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and the DIIR.

Given my focus on both elite and popular politics in order to build up a picture of the polity from the top down and bottom up, I interviewed both Tibetan officials – from the TGiE, Tibetan institutions and NGOs – and Tibetan citizens from across the settlements visited. Two focus groups and semi-structured interviews with 159 respondents were conducted in total. As outlined in Appendix I, interviews were conducted with 21 TGiE officials from a number of departments and statutory bodies (see Figure 3.b), 9 parliamentarians and MP candidates representing a range of different constituencies (see Chapter 8), 13 senior NGO officials from the main Tibetan NGOs based in Dharamsala and Delhi and 6 members of the Tibetan press covering a range of media including magazines, radio, news video and websites. The gender split in each case (18 male and 3 female TGiE officials, 5 male and 3 female MPs, 8 male and 3 female NGO officials and 5 male and 1 female reporters/ editors) was broadly reflective of the gender split within each of these sectors. With regards to recruitment, after being identified by their position within the TGiE/ TPiE/ NGOs/ Tibetan press these individuals were contacted via email or by phone in advance. However, rarely getting a response to these messages, I quickly found it easier to arrange interviews in person when I was in Dharamsala or Delhi, often facilitated from an introduction by one of my gatekeepers.

In each settlement I interviewed local TGiE representatives and camp leaders, staff from Tibetan-run institutions (schools, clinics, handicraft centres, co-operatives, monasteries), local NGO officials and a number of 'ordinary' Tibetan citizens. Due to the concentration of newcomer refugees and Tibetan institutions in Dharamsala, more interviews were conducted there (34) than in other settlements (12 in Majnuka Tilla, 10 in South Delhi, 16 in and around Dekyiling, 6 in Clementown, 11 in Sonamling, 14 in Lugsum Samdupling and 6 in Bangalore). Tibetan 'citizens' were approached through face to face contact facilitated by gatekeepers and by snowballing techniques whereby respondents are asked to

suggest other informants (Valentine 1997). In order to gain a diverse range of interviewees and attempt to avoid overdependence on certain networks within the community (Bloch 1999), several gatekeepers from different backgrounds were used in each settlement. In addition, while by no means a fully representative sample, efforts were made to purposefully sample both lay people and monks/nuns, men and women, those in a range of occupations, those with different levels of involvement in the 'Tibetan cause', those from different regions within Tibet and, perhaps most importantly, those from each of three pre-defined 'political generations'. These were: the Dalai Lama's generation who lived in Tibet and came into exile in the first wave of refugees in the early 1960s; those born in exile; and 'newcomer' refugees who have arrived in India since the late 1980s.

In general, given the highly structured life in monasteries and nunneries, lay members of the community were easier to access than monks and nuns, and men and younger Tibetans were more willing to be interviewed, join focus groups and share political opinions than women and older members of the community. Whilst the resulting bias towards young male interviewees is important to note, this arguable lack of typicality or representativeness was to a degree offset by the quality and positionality of the information that individual respondents could offer (Cook and Crang 1995). For example, a number of my interviewees had held a variety of governmental, NGO and public services posts within the exile community and interviews with these information-rich respondents yielded opinions which were crucial to understanding the evolution of the exile polity, the changing relationship between TGiE and civil society and contextualising contemporary issues and debates.[58] Finally, although my lack of an Indian research visa restricted my access to Indian Government officials – I was only able to interview Indian bureaucrats in Dharamsala and Bylakuppe – I sought to include Indian opinions and experiences regarding the Tibetan presence in India in other ways. At regional and national levels I interviewed Indian journalists, lawyers, activists and retired government officials who had worked with the exile community. At a local level I attempted, where possible, to interview Indians living next to Tibetan settlements. The lack of opinions regarding the Tibetan community often expressed by the latter respondents was revealing in itself, indicating that the exile community has, over the decades, become an increasingly accepted part of

[58] As an example, the current *Kalon* for Finance and DIIR has previously held the positions of Secretary of the Tibetan Youth Congress, Vice President of the National Democratic Party of Tibet, Director of the Tibetan Centre of Human Rights and Democracy, MP for Kham Province and *Kalon* for Health. Also important in this regard were interviews with retired TGiE officials.

the Indian social landscape, albeit Tibetans are rarely assimilated into Indian society (see Chapter 5).

Turning to the interviews themselves, enabling 'opinions, networks of relationships and ideas to be presented and qualified' (Hoggart *et al* 2002: 205) and thereby producing a 'thick description' of events and experiences, these were an essential part of this research. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, and was based on a semi-structured interview schedule. Adopting a standard approach of asking 'grand-tour' questions (Cook and Crang 1995), interviews were introduced with general questions and then moved beyond the descriptive to address opinions and motivations (Longhurst 2003). Whilst the intention had been to record the majority of interviews in order to ensure comprehensiveness of transcription (May 2001: 138), many interviewees – particularly TGiE officials and newcomer refugees – were uncomfortable with this. As a result, many interviews were recorded in note form with detailed transcriptions written up immediately afterwards. Finally, interviews were coded, with resultant themes drawn out and analysed. Acknowledging that 'interpretation is a dialogue between one's data... and the researcher who is embedded within a particular intellectual and institutional context' (Duncan and Ley 1993: 4, cited in Hoggart *et al* 2002: 24), a balance between voices of officials and 'citizens,' and between the words of the respondents ('emic' codes) and my own interpretations ('etic' codes) (Silverman 1993) has been sought in the following chapters.

Given the range of people I spoke to, the interview style was adapted to different circumstances with interviews with TGiE officials tending to be more formal than those conducted with Tibetan 'citizens'. The aim of TGiE interviews was to gain factual information about the structure of the government, its functions and limitations but also an insight into the roles played by and personal opinions of those constituting and employed by the administration. For Tibetan 'citizens', interviews were based around a set of core questions and themes. These included life in the exile settlements; identity documents and self-identification; democracy and elections; access to welfare services and opinions of and relationship with the TGiE more generally. This more flexible structure allowed respondents space to explore issues in their own terms and enabled issues to arise that may not have been anticipated. In addition, new arrivals were encouraged to narrate their journey to and initial impressions of life in exile, and older interviewees asked about how the community in exile had changed over the decades.

Multiple field trips allowed me to conduct follow-up interviews with a number of respondents in Dharamsala and Delhi which, alongside establishing trust, enabled me to ask for clarification and elaboration on issues. One area where this was particularly important was interviewing TGiE officials. It became readily apparent that many current and former government employees felt restricted in what they could say within an official capacity, especially with regards to TGiE's position vis-à-vis the independence movement and its relationship with the Indian authorities. In light of this, additional interviews with a number of TGiE officials in more informal settings where they could be 'out of role' encouraged a more frank sharing of opinions. More generally, the interviews were conducted in places convenient and comfortable to the research participants such as offices, homes, public spaces and cafés (Elwood and Martin 2000) and, on some occasions, having other individuals overhear the interview and chip in thoughts and opinions was valuable for collating a range of opinions.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, two focus groups were conducted with selected groups within the community and focused on topics set by myself (see Appendix I). These were a discussion about the future of Tibetan national identity and changes in the exile government held with five older male members of the Dharamsala community after a meeting of '*Gyalchen Lhenzon*'[59] and a wide ranging discussion about the TGiE, education in exile and the idea of refugeehood with seven Tibetan students (four female, three male) studying at Delhi University and living at a Tibetan-run hostel in the city. Held in informal locations – meeting room and hostel common room respectively – these focus groups enabled me to record a diverse array of opinions and experiences, with the flexible structure of these sessions allowing respondents to bounce ideas off each other and explore the issues from multiple angles (see Barbour and Kitzinger 1999; Oates 2000).

With regards to issues of language, given that Tibetan schools follow the Indian model and are English medium, respondents who were born in India or who had lived there for some time were fluent in the language and therefore the majority of interviews and focus groups were conducted in English. Whilst the advantage of learning a vernacular language and the significance this has for research

[59] This is a group of 14 'Tibetan patriots', notably all men but a mixture of lay and monks, who meet weekly in Dharamsala to discuss the Tibetan freedom struggle and produce a Tibetan language newsletter dealing with 'nationalist issues'.

understandings in cross-cultural settings is noted and appreciated (Watson 2004), my Tibetan language training did not reach beyond a basic level. This facilitated introductory conversations, was a useful ice-breaker and allowed the gist of discussions in Tibetan to be followed, but was not sufficient for conducting interviews. As a result, for interviews with newcomer refugees and older members of the community translators were used,[60] and the fact that translation raises a number of complex issues and limitations regarding mapping – and potentially losing – meaning between and across cultures is noted. In being 'attendant to the translations, heterogeneity and hybridity of concepts across and within languages' (Sidaway *et al* 2004: 1046), I have sought and explored Tibetan translations of key concepts used in this study and have incorporated Tibetan terms in my writing where appropriate in order 'to try to incorporate some of the multiple meanings and nuances that are embedded in them' (Watson 2004: 61).

Finally, as an ethnographic project in a cross-cultural setting, research ethics have been duly considered and built into this methodology (Hay 2003), and this research was approved prior to fieldwork by the Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee. Trust and privacy was ensured in my interviews and focus groups through informed consent. All participants were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the research verbally and through an information sheet (Appendices II and III). Consent was sought and recorded with specifically designed consent forms which outlined that participants had the right to refuse to participate in the research, could withdraw from the study at any stage and could refuse to be tape-recorded (Appendix IV). When the interview was conducted in Tibetan these documents were translated verbally by my translator and, where literacy was limited, consent was achieved verbally and recorded. The concern of misrepresenting interviewees was countered through respondent validation of interview transcripts. The majority of respondents were assured of anonymity. Names of research participants were eliminated, with coding systems used during the fieldwork period and pseudonyms used from the transcribing of interviews through to the writing process. However, with some Tibetan officials, especially those in senior positions, their role prevents complete anonymity and, where appropriate, their job title is used rather than a pseudonym when referring to or citing such interview extracts

[60] Three different translators were recruited through existing contacts and used during the research trips: one in Ladakh, one in Karnataka and one in Dharamsala who travelled with me to Dehra Dun. The positionality of the translator in the research process and the politics of language use, especially where abilities to communicate in English can confer status (Smith 2003) is noted. In light of this, the position of and discrimination experienced by newcomer refugees within the exile community is discussed in detail in the following chapters.

or quotations. This was explained before interviews commenced, and consent for using the information received sought (Appendix III). Noting that researching bureaucracies at the scale of the everyday brings with it the 'the potential and also the risk inherent in naming and disrupting the taken-for-granted powers of the state' (Mountz 2003: 630), I was careful not to discuss or pass on what individual interviewees had said. Such sensitivity is particularly important in this small and highly networked community where rumours can be rife. Finally, with regards to issues of illicit activity such as forged and illegally acquired identity documents (see Chapter 7) and unofficial land transactions (see Chapter 5), these practices are alluded to only in general terms in the following chapters.

4.3 Ethnographies of a (non)state: researching the TGiE through performance, practice and the everyday

> *Reflections on interview with Chief Representative, Ladakh: Third time lucky! Finally secured the interview – a man much in demand. Interview fine – got background to Tibetan communities in Ladakh, his career history and the government line on problems faced – unemployment, drought, local politics – and how they're trying to deal with them. But little things were as revealing as the interview. Was served the ubiquitous Tibetan version of Indian chai from a Chinese flask by an elderly 'pion' – identical set-up to every other TGiE office I've been in. Office itself was also very familiar – pen holder with small Tibetan and Indian flags, panorama photo of Lhasa and TGiE headed reports, letters and stationery. Plenty of interruptions – junior staff needing letters signed, a monk looking for a registration form, three older school students asking about government internships (each clutching a letter from TCV) and local postman calling in for tea and a chat after deliveries to the settlement.*
>
> (Field diary, 25.5.2007)

Although the methodologies outlined above form the core research material for this project, reliance on data from interviews and focus groups alone did not allow me to fully get to grips with this unusual polity. What is particularly challenging in this case is the fact that, as I develop in the following chapters, TGiE's authority and sovereignty is rarely openly declared, identified or officially sanctioned. Put simply, my interviews and focus groups were unable to get at exactly *how* the TGiE functioned and was able to claim legitimacy vis-à-vis its exile population. Whilst arguably more expedient in this case given TGiE's lack of recognised status, the challenges of researching the state more generally have been the discussion of much debate (Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Das and Poole 2004; Mountz 2004; Corbridge *et al* 2005). Reflecting on critical approaches to the state outlined in Chapter 2, these scholars perceive the state not as something concrete there to be

observed and analysed but rather as a structural effect, constituted by fleeting moments and everyday practices and relations (Abrams 1988; Mitchell 1991; Painter 2006). In light of this, alternative methodological approaches to the state – ones influenced by ethnography – are required. Before discussing the ethnographic methods I engaged with in this project, I want to briefly sketch out the genealogy of a shift towards ethnography within political geography more generally.

Given that critical geopolitics and critical IR are premised on the idea of social constructionism, this field rejected participation in 'the realist rituals of strategic analysis' (Dalby 1991: 269) in favour of analysing the texts of international politics (Der Derain and Shapiro 1989: 2). However, whilst textual analysis is analytically rewarding and is engaged with to an extent in this project (see above), this approach has been critiqued for ignoring the experiential and performative and focusing on the discursive, the macro-scale and elite politics at the expense of the material, the everyday and politics from below (Hyndman 2004). In light of this, one theoretical and methodological intervention has been the application of theories of performance and performativity to the concept of the state by critical IR theorists (e.g. Weber 1995, 1998) and critical political geographers (e.g. Sidaway 2002). At first glance, the 'performance' of statehood can be seen to revolve around the public show of 'key metonymic images of nationalism and nationhood' (Hansen 2001: 226) which, as 'symbols of state legitimacy' (Okafor 2000: 69) represent a concerted effort to establish the privileges of sovereign status (Bartmann 2004). As such, the symbol-laden nature of heavily 'imagineered' ceremonies (Ley 2000: 782) such as national days and meetings of state leaders is indicative of the 'spectacle' of statehood performance through which 'states are magicked into existence' (Sidaway 2002: xi).

Focusing less on ritualised practices is a critical engagement with Butler's theorisation of performativity (Butler 1990; Gregson and Rose 2000). Rather than being a fixed, pre-given and natural entity as theorised in orthodox versions of IR or political geography, seen through the lens of performativity, the state is a construct evolving through a continuous performance of norms and practices which constitute the effects of the material state. Weber (1995, 1998) has been a pioneer in this area, with her critical application of Butler's work on performativity to states and sovereignty offering a fascinating post-structuralist re-conceptualisation of formal politics. By applying theories of performativity, the state is only ever what it has been produced as, and the practices which daily constitute the effects of

the material state include foreign policy speeches, phone calls between national leaders, the daily work of customs officials, the validation of documents and participation in international summits (Constantinou 1998).

However, as feminist scholars have argued, such approaches have still often ignored or relegated people's experiences and everyday understandings of politics at a range of scales (Dowler and Sharp 2001; Hyndman 2004). In order to engage with a more sustained focus on agency, the material and how formal political structures operate and are experienced on the ground, we need to shift attention away from a focus on the discursive, representational and dramatic aspects of statehood, and towards mundane everyday political interactions at the micro-level (Megoran 2006). A growing body of work has been undertaken in this vein in recent years, notably by anthropologists (Shore and Wright 1997; Hansen and Stepputat 2001, 2005), sociologists (Billig 1995) and geographers (Secor 2001a; Mountz 2003; Corbridge *et al* 2005).[61] Focusing on the micropolitics of everyday state-making, such scholars employ ethnographic methods to explore *how* the state is conceived and constructed from the bottom up. Crucially, in enabling a productive and enriching 're-peopling' of political geography (Megoran 2006: 625; Crang 2002), ethnography uncovers 'the *processes* and *meanings* that undergird sociospatial life' (Herbert 2000: 550) and thereby facilitates a 'closer examination of points of identification, intimacy, and difference through which the state is constituted' (Mountz 2003: 638). As such, ethnographies of state institutions have disclosed the mundane but frequently hidden world of state officials, bureaucratic procedures, meetings, decision-making and filing (e.g. Gupta 1995). Alongside such empirical research, in a short exposition on theoretical trends within critical geopolitics, Thrift makes a persuasive argument for a shift instead towards the 'little things'; the '"mundane" objects like files, "mundane" people like clerks and mundane words like "the" – which are crucial to how the geopolitical is translated into being' (2000: 380). This parallel agenda for critical geopolitics, one still based on discourse, but on discourse understood in a broader way, is therefore attuned to 'constant hum of practices... shot through with doubts and phantoms' which are crucial to how the geopolitical is translated into being' (*ibid*: 382).

[61] Particularly insightful for this case is Corbridge *et al's* (2005) study of the Indian state as 'seen' from the perspective of its rural poor as, in reversing the logic of Scott's (1998) *Seeing like a State* they investigate the abstract state by focusing on the myriad ways that the state comes into view and how these encounters and engagements are enacted at the local level.

In summary, by focusing attention on the non-discursive and on what people do as well as what they say, ethnography has the potential to reveal 'the contingent nature of state power, and the various tensions, fractures and incommensurabilities that characterize state institutions themselves' (Herbert 2000: 554). As such, ethnographic approaches to the state are therefore highly relevant for starting to address the question of 'where and at what level is the state?' Indeed, as I demonstrate in the following chapters, viewed from the perspective of quotidian practices, performances and objects we see a functioning government engaged in democratic decision-making and providing welfare services to its exiled population. However, whilst theoretically convincing, this engagement with issues of materiality, embodiment and the everyday leaves us with the question of how we actually go about putting such an approach into practice. How do we observe and then write about the little things which constitute the state? Where do we need to be, and how do we document what we see and experience as well as hear?

As an important caveat, acknowledging that '"ethnography" is a term used in different and overlapping ways' (Megoran 2006: 625), my interpretation of ethnography does not extend as far as that traditionally espoused by anthropologists based on extended periods in the field and cultural and social immersion. Rather, drawing on more plural and multi-sited interpretations of ethnography (e.g. Corbridge *et al* 2005), I have attempted to observe and document some of the objects, people and words through which the Tibetan polity is constituted and its legal personality negotiated. In addition, care should be taken not to conflate ethnography with other qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups as outlined in section 4.2 (Herbert 2000). For, whilst social science methods produces 'unique forms of data by creating particular controlled environments', ethnography is premised on the researcher observing and participating in 'social interactions that he/she has not created and does not control' (Megoran 2006: 626).

Perhaps the most obvious displays of TGiE's attempts to construct itself as a legitimate polity were a series of ritualised performances of statehood which I was able to attend and take extensive field-notes at.[62] These included the

[62] My fieldnotes are in themselves a 'method of data collection' as, in producing a commentary of my experiences, thoughts and 'struggles to get "the knowledge"' (Laurier 2003: 133, 136) my notes taken both during these official functions and in my engagements with daily life in Tibetan settlements, were an

commemoration of 'Tibetan National Uprising' on 10th March, 'Democracy Day' on 2nd September, the run up to and polling day for the TPiE elections in 2006 (see Chapter 8) and the World Parliamentarians' Convention on Tibet (Edinburgh, November 2005). I was also able to attend a session of the TPiE and supplemented my field-notes with analysis of media coverage of these events and transcripts of speeches delivered. However, whilst these displays of nationalism and performances of paradiplomacy were key to TGiE's self-representation and offered an invaluable insight into how this polity negotiated its position on the international stage, it is through mundane everyday practices that this legitimacy is reiterated and sustained.

Crucially, focusing on the mundane foregrounds the messiness, ambiguity and contingency of both state politics, and the research process itself (Cook and Crang 1995). Some of the most revealing and valuable insights into the functioning of TGiE came from unexpected encounters and informal conversations on buses, in cafés and simply from engaging with peoples' everyday routines in the settlements. Indeed, the coincidence of situations, events and encounters was central to my research experience. Whilst it was frequently frustrating to find that, for example, my arrival in Bylakuppe coincided with an emergency Settlement Officers meeting in Dharamsala, I also often found myself in the right place at the right time. I was in Leh during fraught local elections and was able to see how the Tibetan community and its leaders negotiated their position and maintained a low political profile. Meanwhile in Dharamsala I witnessed a violent incident between a Tibetan and a local rickshaw driver reignite tensions between the two communities and was able to observe first hand how TGiE officials stepped in to attempt to placate their own people and mediate with the local Indian authorities. On a micro-scale, waiting in back offices for my interviewee to arrive and unexpected interruptions in interviews such as those described above provided an opportunity to see the state 'at work.' In addition, it was through the inconsistencies of bureaucratic practices – mis-spelled names, paperwork lost between offices and uncooperative local officials – that the nature of the relationship between the Tibetan and Indian administrations emerged (see Chapter 7).

Alongside this, my own encounters with Tibetan bureaucracy were enlightening and, whilst as a non-Tibetan my ability to be a *participant* observer studying this

attempt to grasp the social understandings of this community and enabled me to glimpse and analyse national geographies in action at the level of everyday practice.

exile polity was in many ways limited, it was in direct interactions with this administration that I was able to engage with participant observation in a more true meaning of the term. Through a series of interactions with TGiE staff, offices, letters and signatures of approval in order to obtain official permission to conduct my research, I was able to view the and experience customs and practices of Tibetan bureaucracy first hand. Indeed, the series of bureaucratic hurdles I had to negotiate in order to access different institutions and the variety of reactions to my letters of authorisation from different TGiE officials across India provided an invaluable insight into the hierarchies within this polity and how TGiE's authority is constructed by the exile elite in Dharamsala and received on the ground.

Another fruitful methodological approach which tells us a lot about how TGiE functions and constructs claims to legitimacy was a focus on the objects that the exile administration produces. Drawing on Latour's (1987) work, these included TGiE's production of maps of its settlements and services which territorialise its existence in exile (Chapter 5); the flow charts and diagrams the Planning Commission produces as part of its Integrated Development Plans which set out the government's vision for the exile community (Chapter 6); and the demographic data and its statistical analysis collated from the 1998 Tibetan Demographic Survey through which TGiE comes to 'know' its population (Chapter 6). An aspect of this study where objects are particularly important is in my examination of the identity documents issued to exile Tibetans by both TGiE and GoI. As discussed in Chapter 7, these are objects which form a key interface between individuals and the state and are signifiers of authenticity and legitimacy for both the exile government and Tibetan refugees. In addition to the materiality of the objects themselves, I focused on the paper work and the paper workers that bring these documents into existence. This entailed tracing and documenting the role of registration forms and clerks, the processes of renewal and validation, where the documents are kept, who they are handed over to and what emotions are attached to them. Challenges I faced in conducting this kind of research included dealing with sensitive issues of forged documents and discrimination and the fact that my presence was often not welcome in Indian government registration offices. As a result, I recorded information about the practices behind the GoI's registration process for Tibetans second-hand from Tibetan interviews and India lawyers and former officials.

Thrift's (2000) call to attend to mundane people and words also proved enlightening when trying to get a handle on the relationship between TGiE and GoI. As explored in the following chapters, how the relationship between the two administrations is presented at a national level is significantly different from how it is played out in everyday local settings. Whilst the former was ascertained from records of debates in the Indian Parliament, official reports and interviews with senior TGiE officials and former GoI bureaucrats, for the latter I turned attention to the everyday language local Tibetan and Indian government officials used and their understanding of each others' hierarchies and chains of command (see Chapter 5). Crucially, it was at this level that the complexities and subtleties of this relationship could be drawn out, located and pinned down. Banal language was also significant when considering the relationship between 'ordinary' Tibetans and their exile government. For example, the recurrent use of possessives such as 'our' and 'my' to talk about TGiE offices, institutions and individuals affects considerable work in constructing the exiled administration as a 'government' in the minds of its people, and is a key mechanism through which this state-which-is-not-a-state is symbolically legitimated. Finally, having observed, experienced and documented these everyday encounters, objects, people and words, I was faced with the challenge of how to capture this everyday-ness in my analysis and writing, especially as research by its nature is often an exceptionalising practice. Whilst in the main I employed a conventional integration of interview quotations and field observations into the body of the following chapters, I have attempted to use some of this ethnographic material in a different way in the final section of Chapter 8. Focusing on the run up to and polling day for the 2006 TPiE elections, I present a montage of photographs, field-notes, election posters, interview transcripts and press articles in order to provide a 'feel' both for the election process and the material on which this study is based (Crang 2005).

In summary, more unorthodox sources and a more general ethnographic participant observation, constitute an expanded sense of what counts as source material for a study of TGiE and therefore help piece together a more comprehensive picture of its functioning, limitations and lived realities. As such, focusing on the mundane and the material gives us valuable conceptual and empirical breathing space, a space which is particularly useful for thinking about the liminal, the ambiguous and the ephemeral within critical geopolitics.

4.4. Negotiating researcher positionalities and 'giving back' through activism

As Mountz notes, 'it is challenging for social scientists to access the state and other powerful institutions ethnographically' (2003: 629) and, once accessed, a series of power relations and identity constructions need to be negotiated. Critical reflections on the complex power relationships inherent within the research experience and how these are influenced by the 'positionalities of the researcher and the researched is now regarded as accepted practice amongst most feminist and critical geographers' (Hopkins 2007: 387. see Twyman *et al* 1999; Skelton 2001). Following McDowell, as researchers 'we must recognise and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, and write this into our research practice' (1992: 409) in ways that are sensitive to the difference our presence makes in the research, and how the process of research itself can shape social relations (Smith 2003). As such, reflexivity has been promoted by feminist geographers (Kobayashi 1994; Rose 1997) in order to subject the research process itself to scrutiny. Reflecting on my own research, I want to use this final section to discuss my positionality and the crucial role that my involvement in Tibetan activism played in accessing this polity, mediating cross-cultural relations and 'giving back' to the subject community.

In the first instance, my gender and ethnicity were both key factors in how the research encounter was experienced. Whilst gender roles within the Tibetan community are more balanced than in many Asian societies (Butler 2003; TWA 2005), as reflected in my list of interviewees (Appendix I) far fewer women than men take an active role in public or political life. Though I encountered no problems accessing male dominated organisations and institutions, my presence as a lone female researcher travelling independently did raise some eyebrows and provoke concerned comments in the more remote settlements. With regards my 'Britishness' the fact that the Tibetan polity has had a long and ambivalent relationship with Britain (see Chapter 3) meant that there is continued interest in how British citizens view their country's role in the ongoing Tibetan situation. Meanwhile, my Northern Irishness raised a very different set of issues, with the Irish freedom struggle frequently brought into conversation – the film *Michael Collins* was popular in Dharamsala at the time – and the extent to which there are parallels with the Tibetan situation debated. In light of such contrasting reactions,

I was increasingly aware of how my own ethnic and national identity alters in different socio-cultural contexts (see Smith 2003: 186).

In terms of being white, non-Buddhist and Northern-Irish I was automatically an outsider in the Tibetan community. Indeed, in many remote Tibetan settlements I was the only *inji* or 'foreigner' in town. However, my involvement with Tibetan campaigning NGOs in the UK and in India since 2002 was a key connection that I did have with many respondents and my continued participation in Tibetan activism was essential to the research experience.[63] The positionality of the 'activist academic' has been much discussed in geography in recent years (Blomley 1994; Castree 2000; Ruddick 2004). The focus of this work to date has been on situations where the activist social movement is the empirical focus of the research, and where we are encouraged to perceive activism and academia as 'fluid fields of social action' (Routledge 1996: 400). Whilst combining both activism and academic research, my fieldwork in Tibetan communities in India differs significantly from this model. This research does not deal directly with Tibetan activism, nor the Tibet freedom movement more generally and, as such, the roles of myself as activist and as academic have, in the most part, been distinct and demarcated. In therefore offering a different configuration of activism and academia from those proposed in debates so far, I want to step back from discussions on how what we write and what we do cannot and should not be separated (Blomley 1994) and from a notion of a third space of critical engagement (Routledge 1996). Instead, I want to highlight three roles that activism played with regards to my research experience and positionality. Firstly, as a way of mediating cross-cultural issues within the research experience and gaining access to the exile community. Secondly as a mechanism through which I could 'give back' to the research community and, thirdly, as a way of what I term 'being' in the field.

Being politically active in the Tibet movement was an integral part of how I negotiated my position within the 'field'. As a 'known' activist in the small UK Tibet movement, having a number of Tibetan friends and colleagues in India and meeting key figures in the community on previous trips to Dharamsala I was able to quickly become included in the Tibet activist network in India and get to grips with the institutions, internal structures and controversies within the community.

[63] I have been involved with the Tibet movement for several years, co-founding the UK branch of 'Students for a Free Tibet' (SFT) – an international network of Tibetan and non-Tibetan activists www.studentsforafreetibet.org – in 2002, and spending the summers of 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Dharamsala working with and learning from Tibetan NGOs and activists.

My involvement with Tibetan activism was also a vital way in to research sites I was not familiar with, and where I did not already have contacts. Armed with my letter of recommendation from the Office of Tibet in London I was inevitably ushered to speak to the local Settlement Officer – the highest TGiE official in the area (Chapter 5) – and, while such interviews were an intrinsic part of this research, with my Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) 'hat' on and activist contacts I was also able to quickly engage with 'ordinary' Tibetans in the settlements. In addition, I was invited to give presentations in Tibetan schools, and organise informal talks with settlers in the evenings about Tibet activism in the West and current international campaigns. After I had given such talks, my 'stranger' status would reduce, doors would open and people were more willing to talk to me.

Given concerns regarding Chinese spies, there is a degree of suspicion of researchers within the exile community and so a key issue was establishing trust. Having a Tibet activism track record meant that I was an accepted part of an already known community rather than a difficult to place stranger. In enabling me to build up trust quickly and develop rapport within interviews (Valentine 1997), this was key to getting beneath the surface of the Tibetan community. This is in no way an attempt to claim 'insider' status, as the research relationship was invariably dynamic, fluid and constantly negotiated (Nast 1994; Twyman *et al* 1999). Moreover, I am acutely aware that these bonds were not always reciprocal nor that collaboration meant that differences in power and status were erased but, rather, Tibet activism was a way of starting to normalise my relations in the field and I do think it facilitated more equal interactions. For example, exchanges of ideas, information and experiences filtered into many interviews, to the extent that in one interview with a prominent community leader the conversation rapidly shifted from my questions about the organisation of the settlement, to him asking me questions about the Tibet movement in the UK. In light of this, and acknowledging the unusually politicised situation of the Tibetan community in exile, I want to tentatively propose that engagement with activism in the field is a mechanism through which some of the challenges of cultural differences, unequal power relations and fieldwork ethics associated with cross-cultural research can be mediated (Sidaway 1992; Skelton 2001; Smith 2003).

In terms of negotiating my roles as an activist and academic at an everyday level, whilst I was open about my activist work to all my respondents, I did moderate my positionality to an extent according to who I was interacting with. On some

occasions, for example in interviews with members of the Tibetan press, I would choose to 'fit in' by emphasising familiarity with the community in exile, whilst at other times I would 'play dumb' in interviews in order to ask 'potentially... challenging questions in a disarming way that can be mistaken for ignorance' (Herod 1999: 322). However, there were occasions when the negotiation of my dual roles of activist and academic became 'messy' on the ground. One important boundary became apparent during the run up to the 2006 TPiE elections. As discussed in Chapter 8, I spent some time with a youth movement called 'Youth for Better MPs' who were active in raising awareness of the elections and promoted a list of young and progressive candidates. A number of my activist colleagues were members of the group and, whilst this was key to my access to their discussions and meetings, I had to be careful in terms of how my presence with the group as they went campaigning in Dharamsala would be perceived. Although being active in the wider Tibetan movement is actively encouraged, *inji* involvement in domestic exile politics is disapproved of. Moreover, being involved with a prominent and perceived to be 'radical' organisation meant that I was sometimes positioned within the complex internal political matrices of the community. I had to tread carefully when speaking to members of other political NGOs, and with some government officials who, at least within an official capacity, were not supportive of some of our actions.

The second role that activism plays in this research is as a way of giving back to the exile Tibetan community. There are the beginnings of research fatigue within the community and an increasing expectation that the presence of the researcher needs to be justified and mutually beneficial. In light of this and my own involvement with the diaspora in India and the UK, I strove to 'give back' in two ways. Firstly, this project itself is intended to contribute to the Tibetan government and community in exile. The very exercise of analysing what shape and form Tibetan polity in exile takes is arguably a form of critical praxis (Wakefield 2007) and an act of critical collaboration (Routledge 2003).[64] Through contextualising Tibetan politics within the field of political geography and disseminating the research findings back to the exile government and community, this will document the significant political and logistical achievements of the Tibetan community in exile and convey this to an academic and international policy-making audience

[64] In terms of the 'critical' element of 'critical collaboration' this involves treading a fine line between on the one hand unconditional support for a social movement and, on the other hand, avoiding criticising TGiE to the extent that the research undermines the delicate nature of Tibetan politics and the freedom struggle itself (Routledge 2003).

which has often overlooked it, will enhance engagement with and understanding of the current exilic political structures within the diasporic Tibetan community and will provide TGiE with an overview of the polity. As the Additional Secretary at the Department of Home explained to me in an early interview:

> 'we don't always see the whole picture. We have nine to five jobs and don't visit the settlements much. We don't get a chance to speak to our people, to see the work of other offices, departments. But it's important to get the big picture, to see we are going in the right direction and what our weaknesses are. For you it is important to speak to our staff on the ground – they will have different opinions, different ways of presenting their thoughts on how this... on how we work' (18.03.2006).

However, while this may be perceived as a form of 'giving back' from the perspective of TGiE, publicising the case in academic and policy arenas is one step removed from 'ordinary' Tibetans in India. As such, activism is a form of giving back which is much more relevant to people on the ground and one that is actively promoted by the community itself. In terms of what activism as giving back actually entails, the 'work' that I undertook included running campaign stalls in Dharamsala alongside Tibetan colleagues, editing press releases and funding proposals, organising information evenings for Western tourists and being interviewed for Tibetan radio about my involvement with the Tibet movement. Importantly, I was not there to do the work of local Tibetan activists, but rather to share ideas and experiences and act as a 'catalyst' for on-the-ground activism.[65] Moreover, as a way of contributing to the community, activism differs from other methods of giving back practiced by Westerners, such as sponsorship and volunteering in Tibetan schools and clinics. Whilst the latter is always viewed positively, and I participated in English conversation classes with newcomer refugees in Dharamsala on two of my research trips, there is increasing criticism of the dependency on *rogs ram* (sponsorship) within the community (see Chapter 6). Being fundamentally grassroots and non-hierarchical, activism is based on a more equal power relationship than sponsorship or even volunteering. It is about collaboration rather than dependency, on ideas sharing rather than instruction and, with activism continuing 'back home' it is a long term commitment rather than an activity confined to being in the field. However, it is important not to give the impression that activism is the perfect mechanism through which to give back to the research community. An important ethical key issue is the extent to which

[65] A recurrent narrative in the exile community is that young Tibetans are becoming disillusioned with the Tibet struggle and that the presence of Western activists alongside Tibetan activist leaders acts as a catalyst to motivate people to re-engage with politics: a move which is widely welcomed within the community.

activism is a fair exchange for research information (Ruddick 2004) and this was an issue which I continually negotiated in the field.

The third role of activism that I want to briefly mention is perhaps more ambiguous. An often unacknowledged reality of doing fieldwork abroad is how much time there is to fill when you as a researcher do not have pressing commitments and yet your respondents' lives are going on as normal with full time work and family responsibilities. In addition, fieldwork – and especially dealing with Indian and Tibetan bureaucracies – can be a frustrating process, with interviews frequently postponed or cancelled and offices shut for holidays you were not expecting. In light of this, it is easy to feel 'out of place' and in limbo and it can be tricky knowing how to integrate into the community. For me, engaging with activist work has been key to *being* in the field. I am not saying that my activism was simply a way of filling the days and keeping myself occupied, but it was important in terms of engaging myself with the community and being seen to be actively doing something rather than filling the role of the ubiquitous Western traveller 'hanging out' in India. In summary, though not the empirical focus of my research, my involvement in Tibet activism played a significant role in the research *process*. It was a mechanism for starting to ameliorate power inequalities and cross-cultural positionalities, it was a valuable and mutually beneficial form of engagement with the community and was an activity which shaped and structured my time in the field.

4.5 Conclusion

In setting out the research approaches and methods employed in this project, this chapter has described and analysed some of the issues and challenges faced through a focus on 'conventional' social science research methods, ethnographies of the state and the role my positionality and Tibet activism played in the research process. Acknowledging the somewhat artificial separation of research methods and issues discussed above, I want to use this final section to focus on the integration of these methodological approaches. As Law (2004) asserts, there is inherent messiness in social science research and these methodologies cannot be strictly delineated in practice. In reality, I was conducting interviews, engaging in participant observation and negotiating my positionality simultaneously. Indeed, a case study approach lends itself to the use of multiple sources and the employment of a mixture of different methodological approaches. Such strategies were essential

to gaining an overview of Tibetan politics as well as focusing on the everyday details of this administration and attempting to understand the inner workings of this exile community. A key advantage of using multiple research methods is 'triangulation' whereby, through combining complementary techniques to gain a more complete picture of the research topic, the limitations of individual methods can be reduced (Valentine 1997). The complementary combination of textual and discourse analysis, ethnographic participant observation and more conventional interviews and focus groups therefore enables a fuller understanding of the functioning, limitations and lived realities of TGiE to be built up.

In addition, the fact that this range of methodological approaches work across different scales is an attempt to 'understand politics in its multiple manifestations and the ways in which the micro scale of the household and the macro scale of the nation-state are interdependence and co-productive' (Marston 2003: 634). For, in seeking to construct a picture of the political geographies of TGiE from the top down and bottom up, this highlights 'discrepancies between elite and everyday political geographical imaginations' (Megoran 2006: 622), and therefore facilitates a more revealing insight into the configurations of power and space in this case. As well as trying to work across different scales there is also a juxtaposition of the discursive and the material. As I will illustrate in the following chapters, the contrast between the representational and the mundane can work to reveal the different ways in which an administration that remains internationally unrecognised can, through everyday interactions, objects, and people, attempt to construct itself as a government. An integrative approach as outlined in this chapter, where attention is paid to the material and the symbolic, the everyday and the spectacular, practices and images is therefore key to attempting to get a handle on the often contradictory nature of this polity.

Chapter 5
Strategic Territorialisation and Sites of Displaced Sovereignty: Tibetan Settlements in India

> *It's a warm November day and I'm on a government bus leaving the bustle of Mysore, a small but very South Indian city in Karnataka. We travel past Hindu temples, busy markets, palm trees and maize fields. The first indication of where I'm going are a few Buddhist prayer-flags in the distance. I get off at Bylakuppe, an Indian village strung out along the main highway and make my way under an archway decorated with the eight auspicious symbols of Tibetan Buddhism. The track passes a State Bank of India – Tibetan branch – Indian shops and houses, a Tibetan tractor repair workshop and an Indian school, with the buildings becoming more Tibetan as I progress. Soon I reach a second archway which marks the formal entrance to 'Lugsum-Samdupling Tibetan settlement'. I have entered a different world; a world of Buddhist chortens[66] and prayer flags, of monks on motorbikes, of chubas[67] rather than saris, of Tibetan offices, schools, hospitals and monasteries. But look a little closer and the picture blurs, because while no Indians live in the settlement, and leaving the settlement is definitely a process of 'going back to India', this is not an entirely Tibetan world. The vegetable sellers and farm labourers are mostly Indian, the Tibetan signs are also written in Kannada,[68] there are notices reminding Tibetans to register their residency papers and the idli sambar[69] vendors do a roaring trade.[70]*

5.1. Introduction

As the first of four substantive chapters on the form and functioning of TGiE, this discussion focuses on the key issue of territory. Conventionally conceived as bounded and contiguous territory is perceived as fundamental to realist understandings of sovereignty (see Bartelson 1995) and in geographical literature is traditionally associated with the modern state (see Gottman 1973; Paasi 2003). In light of this, a reasonable *prima facie* assumption regarding TGiE is that it has at most a highly tenuous relationship to territory and territoriality, the 'geographical expression of social power' (Sack 1986: 5). Indeed, TGiE has no legal jurisdiction over territory either in Tibet or in exile, nor does it make claims to such jurisdiction in either place.[71] However, TGiE is not a *non*-territorial entity and I will argue in this chapter that this is not a case of sovereignty *without* territory. The TGiE manages 35 Tibetan settlements in India such as the one described above; official Tibetan communities established on land granted by the GoI. Within

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66 Tibetan Buddhist structure, often decorated with auspicious symbols and around which Buddhists circumambulate (see Figure 5.g).
67 Traditional Tibetan robe worn, in different styles, by both men and women.
68 One of the main Dravidian languages of India which is spoken predominantly in the state of Karnataka.
69 South Indian snack of fermented steamed rice pancakes with spicy dal (lentil stew).
70 These observations are based on my field-diary notes from my visit to Bylakuppe in November and December 2007.
71 As discussed in Chapter 3, following the TGiE's current 'Middle Way Approach,' the exile government is seeking genuine autonomy rather than legal sovereignty over the territory of Tibet.

each settlement the exiled Tibetan administration has autonomy over its own affairs, managing and administering housing, land distribution, agriculture and welfare services. Drawing on and weaving together elite narratives and individual stories, this chapter addresses this apparent paradox of a stateless nation managing a series of territorialised settlements and unpacks the complex spatiality of the Tibetan community and government in exile.

Following arguments made in Chapter 2, the discussion here is premised on critical reinterpretations of territory and a conceptual separation of territoriality from territorial sovereignty (Forsberg 1996). As such, nation-states are understood as not the only form that territory takes in the modern world, nor the only space of 'the political' (Mandaville 1999: 654) and therefore the importance of unbundling territory, sovereignty and the state (Ruggie 1993; Anderson 1996) can be recognised and read through this case. In addition, and reflecting the spanning of literatures on both the state and statelessness, the relationships between territory, diaspora and transnationalism will also be interrogated in this chapter. This means engaging with contemporary debates regarding processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation and the nature of 'diaspora space' (Brah 1996) and 'transnational space' (Jackson *et al* 2004). In thereby embracing Delaney's (2005: 12) strategy of exposing issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction commonly obscured by default naturalising discourses, this chapter will explore how the territorial and juridical operations and limitations of TGiE intersect with, extend and challenge such debates about the nature of territory, territorial power and the relationships between territory, governance and nationalism at a range of scales.

After setting out the history and context of Tibetan exile settlements in India and outlining the various Tibetans spaces visited for this research, this chapter will focus on two dimensions of the issue of territory. First, the spatiality of the Tibetan community in exile will be explored through three distinct geographies: diasporic networks, routes and hubs; the TGiE's territorialised administrative hierarchies and nested jurisdictions; and the Tibetanised landscapes of the settlements themselves. Charting these geographies will entail discussions of processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation within the community and TGiE's strategies of territorial, centralised and in many ways state-like governance over its non-contiguous territories. This will then be set alongside the discursive, material and performative construction of the settlements as 'national' spaces,

complex attachments to the homeland and the fundamental contradiction between the perceived permanence of the settlements and the temporality of exile. Secondly, these material and imaginative territorial issues 'internal' to the Tibetan community in exile will be problematised by focusing on the existence of Tibetan settlements within the sovereign state of India. This will entail outlining how the relationships between, and the relative decision-making powers of, the Indian and Tibetan Governments are played out both within official discourses and on a day-to-day basis. The chapter considers the division of juridical responsibilities and explores how settlement boundaries are delimited and nominally policed. Finally, Tibetan spatiality in exile is interpreted as lying between state space and diaspora space and the idea of these settlements as sites of 'displaced sovereignty' is posited.

5.2. History and development of Tibetan settlements in India

The Tibetans who followed the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959 were initially accommodated in GoI administered refugee transit camps at Missamari in Assam and Buxa in West Bengal (See Figure 5.a).

Figure 5.a: Newly arrived Tibetans, Assam, 1969, www.tibet.net/en/image/transit%20camp.jpg

By 1960 there were over 8,000 Tibetans at Missamari and almost 1,500 monks at Buxa but, despite GoI assistance, mortality rates were devastatingly high due to

the sudden change in climate, their arduous journey across the Himalayas and disease outbreaks. In light of this, the Dalai Lama approached the Indian Ministry of External Affairs with a request to resettle these refugees in cooler places where they might be temporarily employed. In response, the GoI established 95 temporary construction camps in the Himalayan foothills where 18,000–21,000 Tibetans were employed as road labourers.[72] The remaining monks were relocated to Tibetan monasteries re-established in Varanasi and South India. However, the road construction camps were not a long-term solution. They failed to provide the necessary source of livelihood, conditions were harsh and families were split up. As Kharat notes, 'the conditions were so bad that Tibetan refugee officials admitted in 1964 that these workers were worse off than if they had remained in Tibet' (2003b: 54). As a result, the Dalai Lama again requested Nehru to rehabilitate the refugees in other parts of India where they could lead a more settled life (Office of the Dalai Lama 1969).

In accommodating this appeal and, in light of the 1962 Sino-Indian border war and recognition that the Tibetans would not soon be returning to their homeland, the GoI initiated a strategy of creating a series of self-contained agricultural settlements for the refugees. The motivation for India's generosity in providing land for the Tibetan refugees to remain and settle in India is framed within official Indian narratives in terms of a moral duty and humanitarian obligation to assist (Kharat 2003b: 51).[73] As the former GoI Indian-Tibetan Liaison Officer told me;

> 'individual states which have harboured Tibetans are motivated by these factors – humanitarian cause, an obligation and the fact that India is the natural land of their rehabilitation. We feel we have a moral duty to care for these Tibetans' (04.06.2007).

The State of Mysore (now Karnataka) was the first to reply to Nehru's request for land, and 3,000 Tibetans were settled on a 1,500 hectare tract of uninhabited jungle land on lease at Bylakuppe in 1960 (Norbu 2004). With the settlers paid a daily wage for their labour, villages were established with groups of five persons allocated a 2½ hectare plot and a one-room tenement. Further land was granted by the Chief Minister of Mysore at Mundgod, and smaller tracts were later made available in Orissa, Maharashtra, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar

[72] These construction camps were organised by the Indian Public Works Department in co-ordination with the Tibetan rehabilitation office (Office of the Dalai Lama 1969: 129).
[73] In addition, and more pragmatically, the Indian Government believed that the Tibetan agricultural settlements would reduce its economic burden and help India's food needs by bringing unused land under cultivation (Kharat 2003b: 55).

Pradesh,[74] Madhya Pradesh,[75] Sikkim, West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh. These settlements came to be established on the basis of different economic activities, with those in South India generally larger and based on agriculture, and those in northern states with less land focusing on handicrafts and agro-industries (see Chapter 6). In addition, Houston and Wright note that Tibetan settlements were predominantly located in remote regions, a geographic distancing which makes them less accessible to political figures and is thereby a strategy through which the 'Indian Government balances the immediate needs of the Tibetans while maintaining cordial relations with China' (2003: 223).

By the end of the first decade in exile, 30,000 refugees had been resettled into 'permanent' sites and, by the early 1980s, all existing settlements were established, and in most cases were at capacity. As a result, few Tibetans who have come to India in recent years have moved to the settlements. This has led to a growing 'unsettled' Tibetan population, today numbering around 9,000 (Planning Commission 2000). A high proportion of these 'unsettled' Tibetans reside in a series of scattered Tibetan communities in the Himalayan states and in major Indian cities. These are areas where TGiE does not administer any land or housing, but where TGiE-run Welfare Offices manage Tibetan schools, clinics and cultural centres, liaise with local Indian authorities, and resolve minor disputes.

In order to reflect this diversity of Tibetan spaces within India, six settlements and scattered communities were visited for this research. As the first agricultural settlement to be established, the settlement of Lugsum-Samdupling at Bylakuppe, Karnataka remains one of the largest and most populous with 10,921 Tibetans residing in 3,500 acres (Secretary, Lugsum-Samdupling Settlement Office, 28.11.2007. See Figure 5.b). Seen as a pioneer rehabilitation project, Lugsum-Samdupling has served as a model for the planning of later settlements, and continues to be viewed as the most developed and successful exile Tibetan community. The settlement consists of seven villages or camps dispersed across agricultural land, with an average of 30 families in each camp. The four sects of Tibetan Buddhism have also rebuilt monasteries next to the settlement, with the largest, Sera, housing almost 3,000 monks. In stark contrast to the infrastructure, facilities and self-sufficiency of Lugsum-Samdupling, Sonamling agricultural settlement in Ladakh faces a number of challenges due to its high altitude

[74] A number of settlements are located in what has since become Uttarakhand, established in 2000.
[75] Mainpat settlement lies within what is now Chattisgarh state, established in 2000.

environment, remoteness and poor infrastructure, and is one of the Department of Home's designated 'priority areas'. Established in 1969 on 522 acres, the initial population of 617 were mainly nomads from Western Tibet.[76] Today the population of 5,584 reside in 11 camps and, in order to supplement agricultural returns, the settlers are engaged in trading, casual labouring and seasonal sweater-selling (Chief Representative Ladakh region, 25.05.2007).

Figure 5.b: Houses in Lugsum-Samdupling.

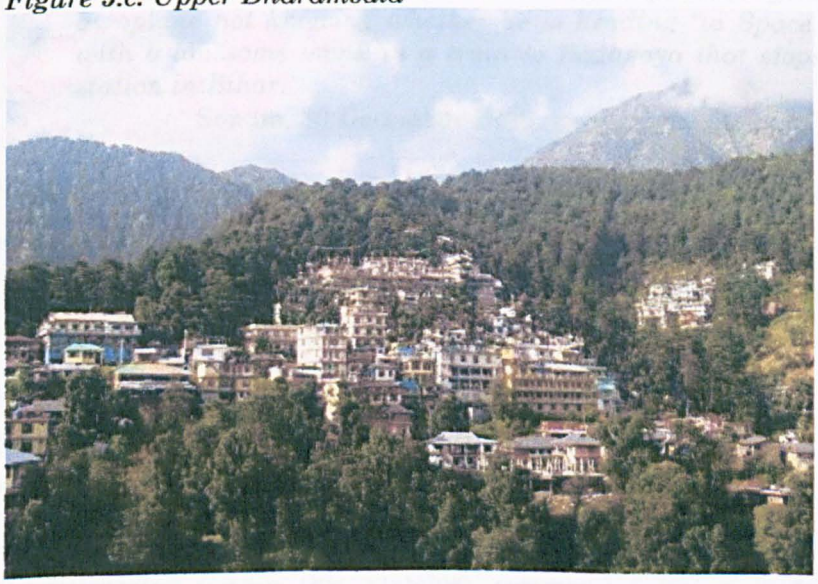
Two distinctive settlements were visited around Dehradun, a prosperous Indian town in Uttarkhand, several hours north of Delhi. Dekyiling Settlement was established in 1981 for the rehabilitation of Tibetan refugees from Bhutan,[77] 'unsettled' Tibetans in the district of Dehradun and retired TGiE officials. The land allocation of 31 acres was intended only for housing, with employment based on

[76] Population figures for the settlements are sourced from the 1998 Tibetan Demographic Survey (Planning Council 2000).

[77] Around 4,000 Tibetans were granted asylum and settled in Bhutan in the 1960s. However, following an alleged attempted coup by Tibetans in March 1974, relations between the refugees and the Bhutanese authorities deteriorated. The Bhutanese Royal Government subsequently demanded that all Tibetans in the state be granted Bhutanese citizenship and assimilated into the host community. Whilst several hundred accepted citizenship, many Tibetans believed losing their refugee status would contradict their ultimate goal of returning home, and were rehabilitated in Tibetan settlements in India in 1980 (Norbu 1976).

handicrafts manufactured on site, seasonal sweater-selling and the service sector in Dehradun. The population has increased from 760 in 1981 to 1,941 today and the settlement has a dispensary, school and monastery. Given the availability of land, favourable climate and proximity to Delhi and Dharamsala, numerous Tibetan institutions have been established around Dekyiling. These include Ngoenga school for handicapped children, Songtsen Buddhist library, Rajpur handicraft centre, Tibetan Homes Foundation school and several large monasteries. In contrast to Dekyiling, Clementown was established not by TGiE but by a group of Tibetans from Amdo province. The settlement has a current population of 1,823 and continues to be run by the settlers themselves, with their 'Clementown Settlement Society' managing the secondary school, health clinic and carpet-making centre. Finally, two scattered communities were also visited. Dharamsala, a hill-station in Himachal Pradesh, has been the 'capital' of the exile community since 1960 (see Figure 5.c).[78] It has since developed into a densely populated 'busy administrative and commercial centre for the Tibetan refugee community' (Prost 2006: 234), home to the TGiE, Dalai Lama and numerous Tibetan NGOs, media outlets, and cultural and religious institutions. Frequently referred to as 'Dhasa' (an amalgamation of Dharamsala and the Tibetan capital Lhasa) by its 'local' Tibetan residents, Dharamsala has become the geographical centre and base of power for the exiled community, providing a key focal point for pilgrimage, religious teachings and political activism.

Figure 5.c: Upper Dharamsala



[78] Dharamsala is in effect two towns: Lower Dharamsala is a predominantly Indian market town while Upper Dharamsala or 'McLeod Ganj' is where the majority of the Tibetan community is based. The headquarters of TGiE is located midway between the upper and lower towns at 'Gangchen Kyishong'.

Lastly, Majnuka Tilla, a Tibetan colony in North Delhi which was established in the early 1960s is one of the oldest urban Tibetan communities in India. This is the key commercial and transport hub for the exile community, with refugees, pilgrims, traders and students passing through en route to Dharamsala, Nepal (and from there Tibet), the settlements and monasteries in South India and the West. As Samphel writes in *Tibetan Bulletin*:

> '[while] Dharamsala is considered the heart of the Tibet world... it is MT [Majnuka Tilla] that constitutes the commercial centre of the exile community. It is the hub of Tibetan commerce and spreads its limited prosperity along its many spokes to other Tibetan communities in all four directions of the subcontinent and beyond' (2006: 27).

Therefore, whilst having broadly the same administrative set-up, the complex history of negotiations with the Indian government at central and state levels, and their heterogeneous locations, climates and environments means that the Tibetan settlements in India are highly diverse. They vary considerably in size, land use, economic activity and degree of TGiE control.

5.3. The spatiality of the Tibetan community in exile: networks, territorialised governance and homeland attachments

> *'The realities of exiled Tibet thrive in tile-roofed mosquito-buzzing refugee camps; in the narrow streets of Dharamsala; with a newly arrival from Tibet who purchases a visa from some unscrupulous agent and sits in an aeroplane not knowing whether he is heading "to Space or to Spain;" and with a lonesome monk in a train to Bodhgaya that stops in a godforsaken station in Bihar.'*
>
> Sonam, 30 December 2006, www.tibetwrites.org/reviews/littlelhasa

Turning to the spatiality of the exile Tibetan community in India and the territorialising strategies of TGiE, this section explores three distinct geographies: diasporic networks, routes and hubs; a core-periphery structure of hierarchical administration and nested 'jurisdictions'; and the place-based politics of the settlements themselves. These spatial systems exist simultaneously at a range of scales, and cohorts within the exiled community engage with and work across these geographies in different ways. Discussing each in turn opens up theoretical concerns regarding how notions of territory and territoriality have developed and are articulated within this stateless community. These include processes and practices of deterritorialisation and (re)territorialisation which cross-cut these geographies, the TGiE's articulation of aspects of both state space and diaspora

space, and the mechanisms and limitations of TGiE's use of territorialising strategies to govern its non-contiguous settlements in exile. Finally, complex relationships with the homeland will be unpacked to explore the fundamental contradiction between attachments to place, landscape and land in India and the temporariness and rootlessness of exile.

5.3.1. Diasporic deterritorialisation: mobility, networks and hubs

As discussed in Chapter 2, post-structuralist approaches prevalent in diaspora and transnationalism literature eschew reified, abstract and bounded notions of territory in favour of a focus on deterritorialisation and the idea of networks (e.g. Brah 1996; Soguk 1996). As Wahlbeck argues, 'deterritorialisation as a lived experience seems to be intrinsically connected to life in exile' (1998: 4). In light of this, as a diaspora engaged in transnational practices, a logical assumption regarding the spatiality of the exiled Tibetan community is that it is highly networked and engaged in processes and practices of deterritorialisation, and in many ways this is the case.

Perhaps the most obvious arena in which exiled Tibetans are conceived as 'networked' is the global 'Free Tibet' movement. Developing rapidly since 1960, and receiving considerable attention during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, this network of Tibetan activism consists of hundreds of individuals, Tibetan NGOs and Western-based TSGs whose activities and campaigns are increasingly international. This includes protests inside China and Tibet, in exile communities, and at numerous national parliaments and corporate headquarters (McLagan 1996; Davies 2009). As discussed in Chapter 4, it was my own involvement in Tibet activism that allowed me access to transnational Tibetan networks and key contacts in the diaspora

Within the exile Tibetan community itself, transnational connections are extensive and important. Almost everyone I interviewed in India had a network of relatives, friends and sponsors across South Asia and in the West, and was engaged in a wide range of transnational practices (see Hess 2006; Yeh and Lama 2006). Such networks and connections made a significant impression on my research experience. Whilst travelling across India, I stayed almost exclusively in Tibetan hotels or homes, sometimes even travelled on Tibetan-run buses and found myself frequently delivering messages and parcels to friends and family of Tibetans I know both in the UK and India.

Inseparable from such networks is the fact that the exile Tibetan community has been and continues to be highly mobile, with around 65% of Tibetans and almost 80% of the young population seasonally on the move (Planning Council 2000: 7). Exiled Tibetans travel frequently for religious pilgrimages and teachings, sweater-selling in Indian cities, attending college, participating in political protests and visiting relatives. It is commonplace for family members to be scattered in the settlements, monasteries, colleges and working 'abroad' in the West. Such an itinerant existence and scattered population is summed up by poet and activist Tenzin Tsundue when he writes;

> 'Ask me where I'm from and I won't have an answer. I feel I never really belonged anywhere, never really had a home. I was born in Manali, but my parents live in Karnataka. Finishing my schooling in two different schools in Himachal Pradesh, my further studies took me to Madras, Ladakh and Mumbai. My sisters are in Varanasi but my brothers are in Dharamsala' (2003: 28).

Concomitant with such mobility and transnational connections are extensive communication flows within the exiled community. The visible signs of this include the international telephone booths, internet cafes and international money transfer offices prominent in all Tibetan areas, a common trait of refugee settlements more generally (see Perouse and Mwangi Kaganja 2000). Indeed, the internet has become a mainstay within the diaspora, with all but the most remote settlements having web-connections and news portals such as phayul.com and websites like tibet.net creating an increasingly important transnational cyber-community (see Rushkoff 1994). This 'virtual Tibet' is central to international Tibetan activism and can be read as a de-territorialising mechanism employed to overcome the spatial restrictions of a global diaspora and a territory-less nation (see Negroponte 1995; Luke 1998).

This picture of a highly networked and mobile stateless community engaged in transnational practices certainly resonates with conventional understandings of diaspora space, networks and processes of deterritorialisation (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Latour 1993; Smith 2005). However, this is far from a smooth 'space of flows' (Castells 1996) or a flattened network of 'materially heterogeneous' (Law 1994: 2) relations. Spend any time in the Tibetan community in exile and you are aware of distinct territorial structures. For a start, key routes are evident within this network, the most obvious of which are those taken by refugees coming into exile from Tibet. Whilst in the 1960s Tibetans came to India via a number of means

through Nepal and India, today the majority of refugees follow a distinct route which is increasingly 'managed' by TGiE. As a young man recently arrived from Tibet and now living in Dharamsala narrated:

> 'For me it took many weeks to leave Lhasa... one guide he took money but then disappeared... [and] we had to wait for all the group be ready. For over 20 days we walked over the mountains... walking at night and sleeping in the day. Reaching Nepal was OK... we were lucky with the Nepali police. In the Kathmandu receptions centre I stayed for 27 days... and they provided everything. After we had papers in Kathmandu and we were a big group, they sent us by bus to Delhi. In Delhi we stayed in the Reception Centre... but only for one night. I had Reception Centre papers from Kathmandu so I presented them in Delhi. That Reception Centre already had a list of names of who should be on the bus so they read out those names. From Delhi I reached Dharamsala Reception Centre by bus and here they asked more questions and gave advice and asked if I wanted to go to school. So after maybe 3 weeks in the Dharamsala Reception Centre, I went to transit school' (Ugyen, 31.03.2007).

Apparent from this and numerous accounts I recorded of such journeys, is the importance of key 'staging posts' such as the Tibetan/Nepalese border, the Tibetan Reception Centres in Kathmandu, Delhi and Dharamsala, and schools and monasteries to which the refugees are subsequently sent (see Chapter 6). Considering the community in exile more generally, a number of key sites – Dharamsala, Majnuka Tilla, Bangalore and Kathmandu – can be seen to act as administrative, cultural and commercial hubs within this networked diaspora.

In summary, therefore, this is not an unpatterned network, but rather one with defined – though often vulnerable – hubs, nodes and routes. However, what marks this case out as distinctive is the fact that whilst networks and processes of deterritorialisation are an important feature of the spatiality of the Tibetan community in exile, these are overshadowed by more conventional material attachments to and appropriation of territory in exile. A focus solely on diaspora space and deterritorialisation therefore fails to tell the full story in this case, as it obscures the politically important processes of reterritorialisation that occur within the community and TGiE.

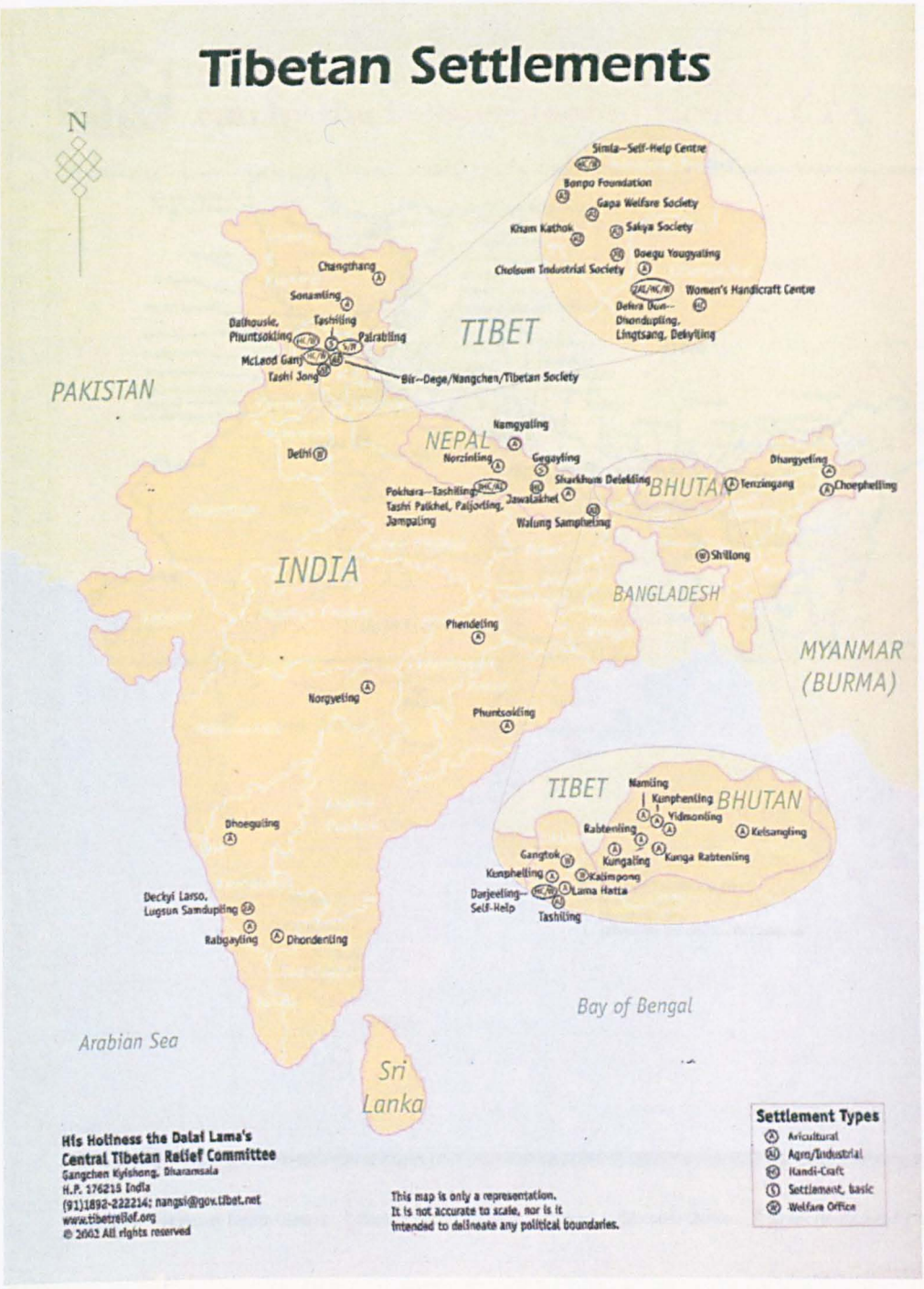
5.3.2. Reterritorialisation in exile: governing non-contiguous territories.

In focusing attention on a more conventionally territorialised set of spatialities, hierarchies and scales which are managed by TGiE, I want to shift attention to a second important geography of the Tibetan community in exile: the series of TGiE designated 'Tibetan spaces' in exile. In attending to such spaces I will argue that

TGiE's material and symbolic construction of territories is intricately intertwined with its project of state-like governance in exile. Key to understanding such territorialised functioning of the exile government is its articulation of a discourse of 'settlement'. Appearing numerous times and in multiple ways in official TGiE reports and interviews with Tibetan officials, the term 'to settle' (*shi chaya*) is employed to construct a hierarchy of Tibetans' interaction with and dependency on TGiE, contingent on where and how they live in exile. How 'settled' an individual is perceived to be ranged from the 'ideal' scenario of Tibetans living in self-contained and homogenously Tibetan settlements (e.g. Lugsum-Samdupling), through to settlements where employment was not based 'on site' (e.g. Dekyiling), scattered communities living among their Indian hosts (e.g. Dharamsala) and finally the so-called 'unsettled population' who are effectively lost to the exile Tibetan administration. There is recurrent and ongoing concern regarding this latter population, with government reports over the years listing figures of Tibetans yet to be 'settled' and the 'success' of TGiE in the early years was often measured in terms of how many Tibetans had been 'rehabilitated' in settlements (e.g. *Tibetan Review,* December 1976: 9–11. see Chapter 6 for a discussion on how TGiE discursively constructs and attempts to manage this 'unsettled' population).

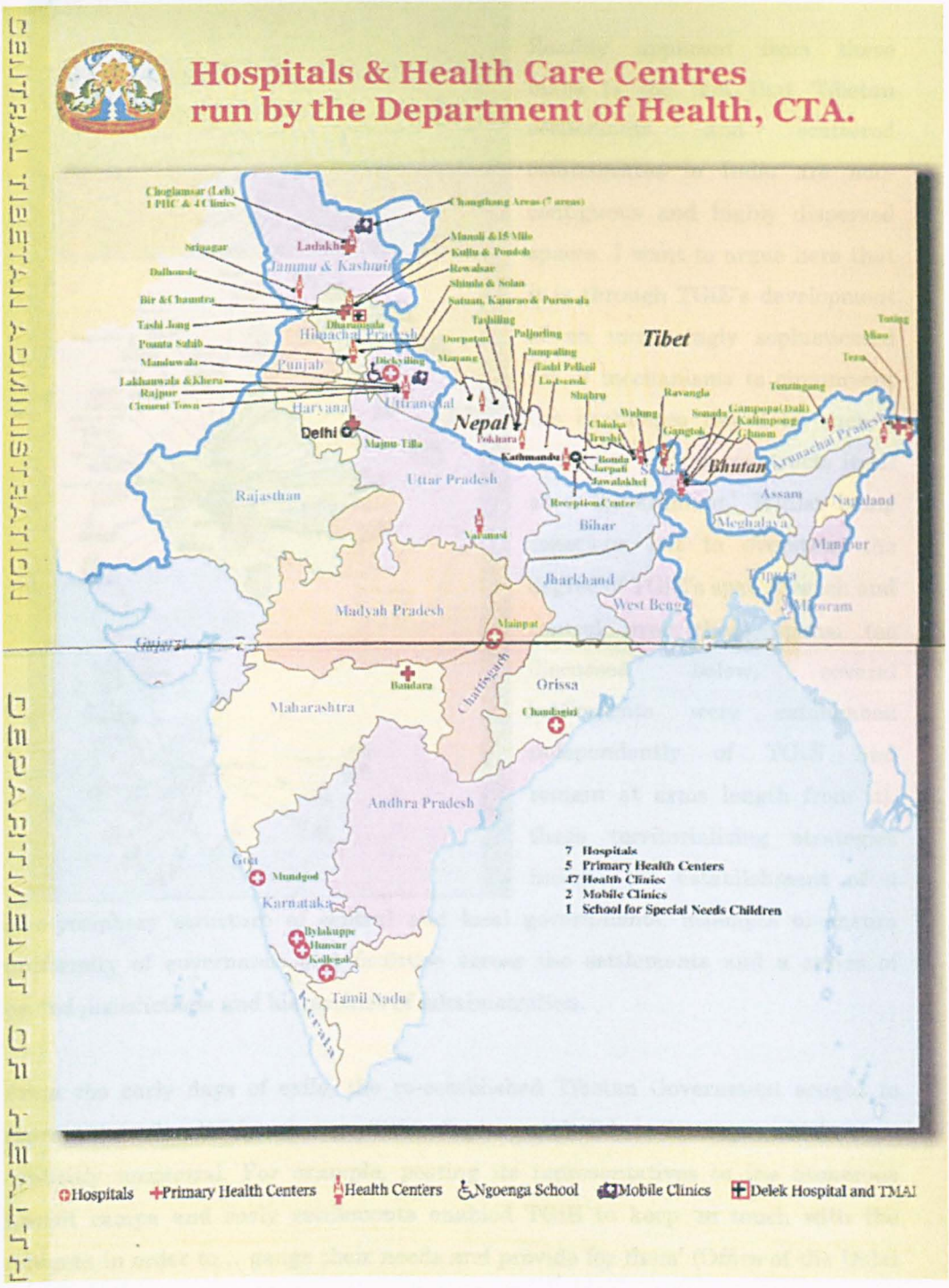
Alongside this discourse of 'settlement', the most obviously representational of TGiE's territorialising strategies is the administration's mapping of its spaces in exile. Whilst the diaspora fails to appear on any conventional maps – its lack of legally recognised status or jurisdiction precludes its inscription on political representations of India – TGiE produces its own maps of Tibetan settlements, schools and health facilities (see Figures 5.d, 5.e, 5.f). These are cartographic exercises which serve 'as a sense-making machinery' (Ferguson 1996: 165) for TGiE, and thus offer an insight into how this administration inscribes its spaces in exile and endows them with 'a content, a history, a meaning and a trajectory' (Krishna 1996: 194). Appearing merely as illustrations in brochures produced by TGiE departments, it is important not to read too much into these maps. Yet the nevertheless 'render visible the space over which government is to be exercised' (Rose-Redwood 2006: 475) and thereby facilitate the practice of 'governing at a distance' (Miller and Rose 1990).

Figure 5.d: Map of Tibetan settlements in India and Nepal (CTRC 2003: 24).[79]



[79] It should be noted that the concentration of settlements in the Northern Himalayan states is somewhat misleading with regards to the Tibetan population distribution in India as these settlements are considerably smaller than the agricultural settlements in the Southern states of Karnataka, Orissa and Maharashtra.

Figure 5.e Map of Hospitals and Health Care centres, (Department of Health, 2003: 6-7)



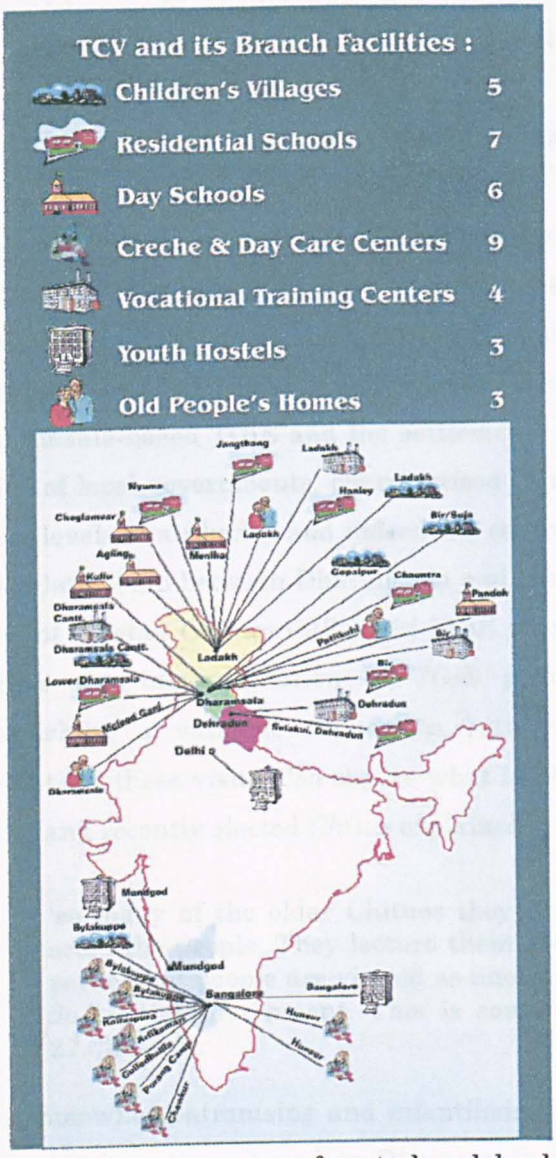


Figure 5.f Map of Tibetan Children's Village schools and institutions (TCV 2006: 4)

Readily apparent from these maps is the fact that Tibetan settlements and scattered communities in India are non-contiguous and highly dispersed spaces. I want to argue here that it is through TGiE's development of an increasingly sophisticated set of mechanisms to circumvent the challenges raised by such a spatiality that it constructs itself as a 'government.' Whilst being conscious not to overstate the degree of TGiE's spatial reach and control over these spaces (as discussed below, several settlements were established independently of TGiE and remain at arms length from it), these territorialising strategies include the establishment of a core-periphery structure of central and local governments, attempts to ensure uniformity of governance and facilities across the settlements and a series of nested jurisdictions and hierarchies of administration.

From the early days of exile, the re-established Tibetan Government sought to represent and actively manage 'its' refugees, and did so in ways which were explicitly territorial. For example, posting its representatives to the numerous transit camps and early settlements enabled TGiE to keep 'in touch with the refugees in order to... gauge their needs and provide for them' (Office of the Dalai Lama 1969: 173). In addition, the exiled administration quickly established itself as the central authority within the exile community. As Goldstein explains:

> 'the ready availability of a core of highly experienced and competent governmental administrators provided the Tibetans a ready-made organisation through which resources could be effectively aggregated and policy decided on and implemented.... The Dalai Lama's Government offered the scattered Tibetan refugees a centralised and efficient organisation which could integrate and represent their needs' (1975: 20).

This centralised authority of TGiE has been consolidated over the intervening years and is key to how TGiE has attempted to govern its non-contiguous (though often bounded) spaces. A key aspect of centralised power is its relationship to the periphery, and a number of interviewees described the relationship between the Dharamsala-based TGiE and the settlements as one of a central government and series of local governments, characterised in terms of hierarchies, communication flows, levels of authority and indeed the centre's misunderstanding of local issues. The relationship between Dharamsala and the settlements is reinforced by regular visits of Tibetan *Chitues* (MPs) and TGiE officials to monitor progress on projects, discuss the implementation of TGiE policies and hear grievances. Whilst establishing a valuable connection between TGiE and the majority of its population, these visits also expose what is often a problematic relationship. As a young and recently elected *Chitue* explained:

> 'so many of the older Chitues they go to the settlements and preach and scold the people. They lecture them about how to think and behave.... The settlement people are viewed as uneducated, as need [sic] to be told what to do by the government. This is something we have to change' (Samphel, 27.02.2007).

This somewhat patronising and infantilising attitude is echoed, albeit to a lesser extent, in how those based in Dharamsala or Delhi conceive of the 'peripheral' settlements and their inhabitants. Many interviewees in these hubs of the Tibetan diaspora referred to the settlements as their childhood home, where their parents continue to live and where they visit in the holidays. In essence, spaces defined as residential and static. Illustrating a familiar core-periphery dynamic, the distance between the settlements and Dharamsala can thus be seen to exist both materially and in the imagination.

Shifting attention to how this core-periphery model of governance is played out in administrative relationships, key to the management of space in exile is the increasingly sophisticated hierarchy of authority and leadership that TGiE has developed across different territorial scales. The first tier of administration below the TGiE departments in Dharamsala are a series of 'Chief Representative Offices'

(CRO) located in Karnataka, Ladakh and Uttarakhand. As official government offices at the regional scale, the CROs oversee the implementation of TGiE policies in their settlements, distribute project funding and liaise between the respective Indian State Governments, the Tibetan communities and the TGiE. Below the CROs, each settlement has a Settlement Officer and each sizeable scattered community a Welfare Officer who is the official representative of the Department of Home at this 'local' level. This official is usually appointed by TGiE, spends 2–4 years in any given settlement and therefore is not a settler per se and has no land.[80] The Settlement Officer is charged with overall control of the settlement, taking on the roles of Head of the settlement, Chief Diplomat and Chief Justice, sitting on school, monastery, hospital and cooperative committees and acting on behalf of settlers in their dealings with Indian and Tibetan authorities. As the Settlement Officer at Dekyiling explained:

> 'our responsibilities are to look after the welfare of the Tibetan people so we deliver the Tibetan government services for education, health and general welfare ... and also to maintain peace and order in our community and to follow the rules and regulations of the land [India]' (18.04.2007).

Within the broader functioning of TGiE, Settlement Officers are key figures and important points of interaction which 'ordinary' Tibetan exiles have with their government. As such, these individuals wield substantial power within the settlement community as they can issue official TGiE letters and documents, provide official TGiE stamps and signatures and can thereby recommend (or indeed oppose) an individual for sponsorship, scholarships or visa applications. Moreover, through annual Settlement Officer meetings and a 'rule book' issued by the Department of Home outlining in detail their role and responsibilities, this cadre of administrators are fully familiar with the systems and philosophy of the central government and are therefore able to implement relatively standardised management practices in the different settlements.[81] Indeed, with these officials being rotated around different settlements every few years, a surprising degree of consistency of practice is achieved, albeit some settlement office staff noted that this 2–4 year rotation system did have drawbacks for seeing through local infrastructure projects which had a longer time frame (Secretary, Lugsum-Samdupling Settlement Office 28.11.2007).

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[80] In line with the Charter of Tibetans in Exile (1991), settlements are encouraged to elect their own Settlement or Welfare Officer. However, there has been a slow uptake on such elections and only Dharamsala and Shillong currently have elected Welfare Officers.

[81] The 'Guidelines for Settlement Officers' booklet was first issued by the Department of Home in 2003 and was to be found in each of the Settlement Offices I visited.

Not only do Settlement Officers form a distinct layer within Tibetan officialdom, but they and their staff are also the face of TGiE at a local level. Describing how he deals with Tibetans, foreign tourists and local Indians on a daily basis, the Dharamsala Welfare Officer explained:

> 'we have to do the right thing every time... you see we are the representatives of the government, and if we do something wrong then it will look really bad for all the Tibetans. We are the public face you see' (04.04.2007).

Moreover, it is this status as 'representative' of TGiE and, by extension, the Dalai Lama, which endows these officials with the moral (rather than strictly legal) authority to mediate disputes and make key decisions within the settlement community. This authority draws strongly on the hierarchies and paternalism of the traditional political system (Goldstein 1975), but is also an authority which exposes generational differences. As a young graduate in Majnuka Tilla recounted:

> 'the older generation, they see the Welfare Officer and other government staff as representatives of His Holiness – like the staff from Lhasa. So no matter if that person is a devil or a saint, still they will bow to him and stick out their tongue.[82] They are always showing so much respect, even if they don't agree with what he says. But then... the younger generation, we are more straight. If I don't agree with the Welfare Officer, I will tell him directly' (Chimi, 07.06.2007).

At the base of TGiE's hierarchy of authority, and forming a key element of its attempts to engage with wider discourses of democracy, participation and accountability are Local Assemblies. Elected from within the settlement community for three-year terms, assemblies are operating in 37 out of the 47 larger settlements.[83] Promoted strongly by TGiE as reinforcing 'active and democratic grassroots participation both in decision-making and the day-to-day functioning of the Settlements' (Planning Council 1994, Section 1.2.7), these assemblies function as the legislature to the executive role of the Settlement Office. Their activities therefore include passing and auditing the local budget, holding the Settlement Office to account, and drafting rules and regulations for the settlement.[84] Following the central government/local government relationship mentioned above, the

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[82] Sticking out ones tongue is a Tibetan sign of respect (Dresser 1997).

[83] It is notable that, alongside very few female Settlement Officers or *Gyabons*, Local Assemblies are constituted of predominantly male members. Unlike the TPiE, these elected bodies do not have reserved seats for women (TWA 2005: 48).

[84] These rules and regulations include restrictions on liquor and gambling in the settlements, the terms of communal labour (for infrastructure repairs and preparations for settlement events) and the organisation of *pujas* (prayers).

establishment of Local Assemblies can thus be seen as augmenting the settlements' function as municipalities with their own local government structures and democratically elected leadership.

Completing the three pillars of democracy at the 'national', 'regional' and 'local' levels is a hierarchical judiciary structure, albeit still in its early stages. As the Secretary of the Supreme Justice Commission explained:

> 'So there are three layers to our judiciary, so first is Supreme Justice Commission, then we have Circuit Justice Commission and then Local Justice Commissions. For the Circuit Justice Commissions which is the regional level there is provision in the Charter for five but... so far we... it has not yet been implemented. For the Local Justice Commissions these are for every settlement but only two are so far fully-fledged and between them I think there are maybe only 2... maybe 3 cases. So for most settlements the Settlement Officer he is also the Local Justice Commissioner' (22.03.2006).

Before discussing the theoretical issues raised by these territorialising structures and strategies of TGiE, it is important to sketch out some of their limitations. Starting where we finished, the Tibetan judicial system is more of a paper judiciary than a practicing one. Given TGiE's existence within the sovereign state of India, its judiciary has very limited powers, only able to hear civil disputes from within the Tibetan community and, without powers of detention, is extremely restricted in the punishments it can impose let alone enforce (discussed below). In light of this, and without prior experience of secular judicial practices in pre-1959 Tibet (French 1995), there has been a distinct lack of engagement with the different levels of Justice Commission. Whilst Dekyiling and Lugsum-Samdupling have new multi-storey buildings for their 'Local Justice Commissions', to date there was only one case pending at each and the buildings remain unused except for occasional school visits. As a farmer in Lugsum-Samdupling told me:

> 'with our justice commission, there are some staff, but not so much work... people here we joke them [*sic*] – it's the easiest job! People, they go to their camp leader or Settlement Officer if they have a problem. No one goes to justice commission. I think our people are scared of the legal system – they always sort out arguments among themselves, not go to the court' (Thakchoe, 16.11.2007).

As such, whilst the institutional structures and codified regulations, there remains a lack of legal consciousness and awareness of the court model of dealing with disputes within the exile community in general (Kaushik, Dharamsala 14.03.2007). However, despite their under-use and limited powers, both government officials

and settlement residents described how the existence of the justice commissions was important for two reasons. Firstly, this nascent judiciary was symbolically significant in completing the tri-partite structure of democratic governance (legislative, executive and judiciary) and thereby fulfilling a key aspect of statehood and validating TGiE as a 'government'. Secondly, the exile judiciary fulfils an important aspirational role of providing the refugees with an opportunity to experience and become trained in judicial practices in order to implement such a system in future Tibet (Thinley 1990).

In terms of the Local Assemblies, whilst the current *Kashag* has increased funding and training for these bodies in an effort to enhance their effectiveness, in may regards they fail to live up to their potential. As Frechette notes in the case of Local Assemblies in Kathmandu:

> 'because the Charter [1991] itself is not very explicit on what local authorities would do, there was considerable disagreement over how to proceed once the assemblies were established... how exactly the Local Assemblies were supposed to make laws was unclear and undecided' (1997: 184).

Such confusion regarding the remit and function of these bodies was echoed by a number of interviewees and, across the settlements visited, there was a lack of engagement with the assemblies, with a number of settlers regarding it as little more than an extra title acquired by members of the settlement elite.

Taking this dissatisfaction with TGiE-imposed governance structures as a starting point, I now want to explore a number of challenges to the exile administration's governmental reach and territorialising strategies. The first is the importance of non-TGiE governance within TGiE-run settlements. Meaning 'representative of 100' the *Gyabon* or 'camp leader' acts as an intermediary between the Settlement Office and the camp residents, and is charged with a wide array of responsibilities. Being simultaneously 'the local lawmaker, the local police and the local judge' (Tsering 2000: 19) these range from passing on TGiE information, settling disputes within the camp, collecting utilities payments from settlers, designating individuals for scholarships and managing camp construction projects (Chonpel, Sonamling, 24.05.2007). As a number of scholars have noted, the continuation of traditional administrative structures and indigenous patterns of leadership from Tibet in the form of the *Gyabon* has been key to the smooth and successful transition to life in exile (Palakshappa 1978; Norbu 2001). Indeed, on the ground,

the system of *Gyabons* appears to work well, with a clear 'chain of command' in operation whereby individuals approach their *Gyabon* with a problem, who then takes their case to the Settlement Officer where he vouches for 'his resident'. If the issue cannot be dealt with at the Settlement Office level the case is passed on to the Department of Home in Dharamsala and these 'proper channels' as one official called them also operate in reverse.

However, what is striking within the settlements is the markedly different ways that Tibetans relate to and interact with the traditional system of the *Gyabon* compared to the leadership structures introduced anew by TGiE. Not only are minor disputes overwhelmingly resolved by the *Gyabon* – rarely making it to the Local Justice Commission – but settlers are more likely to consult their *Gyabon* than their Local Assembly member about general settlement management issues. As such, the TGiE instituted bodies often appear superfluous. They are there to complete the democratic model of governance, to tick the policy boxes in Dharamsala and provide training for politics in the future homeland, but seem of limited practical use in contemporary settlements. Another recurring issue was the fact that the *Gyabons* are 'local people' in contrast to TGiE staff sent from Dharamsala, based in the settlement for only a few years and often living in separate accommodation literally on the 'outskirts' of the settlement. A case where this differentiation between local leadership and TGiE leadership is particularly stark is that of Majnuka Tilla.

Established in 1960 by refugees who had initially been accommodated in Arunachal Pradesh and Nepal, Majnuka Tilla was never fully recognised as a Tibetan settlement by TGiE and was run by the refugees themselves. As the TGiE-appointed Secretary at the Welfare Officer explained:

> 'unlike other settlements established by our government where a letter was sent by Government of India to Tibetan government saying here is the land, you are in charge, you organise the settlement, here you see the people began the colony themselves and so it was never registered with our government – and so it doesn't enjoy privileges from Tibetan government as other settlements' (16.04.2006).

However, with increasing fiscal capacity and a desire to unite the exile community, in 1983 the TGiE 'established a Welfare Office for the Majnuka Tilla people and appointed here a government officer to look after the settlers' wellbeing' (Jampa, Majnuka Tilla, 05.06.2007). Given this history, the colony has two distinct

leadership structures; the original 'local' leadership, and the more recent TGiE leadership, with a clear differentiation of roles and responsibilities. The TGiE-run Welfare Office manages the Tibetan government institutions within the colony,[85] administers the Department of Home welfare stipends and acts as an intermediary between the residents, the TGiE and local Indian authorities. In contrast, the locally-run 'Residents' Association' deals predominantly with local issues; organising community functions, running the local temple, dealing with utility companies and the administration of Indian ration cards, and holding the population records for the camp. As such, this Association is often described as equivalent to an Indian *panchayat* or village council. Materially reinforcing these different roles is the location of the two offices within the colony, with the Welfare Office situated above the TGiE-run health clinic and backing onto the Tibetan school, and the Residents' Association located in the heart of the old part of the colony, next to the community temple and above the branch offices of TYC and TWA.

The relationship between these two authorities appears to be close yet under constant negotiation. From the Welfare Office perspective, the Residents' Association is seen as a bridge between themselves and the colony residents, whereas the Residents' Association see the Welfare Office as the 'official' representatives for the colony, directing me to speak to them first as this was the 'right order' and 'proper way' of going about things. However, the power dynamics between these offices look to change in the near future, as the TGiE – in what appears to be an attempt to model the colony along the same lines as other settlements – plans to establish a Local Assembly in the community. Such a body, although technically also formed of 'local people,' will likely be a direct challenge to the authority of the Residents' Association. In summary, these current and potential power struggles in Majnuka Tilla therefore offer a valuable insight into how TGiE perceives its role in the settlements, and in turn how this is received on the ground. On the one hand, TGiE policies and rhetoric have been actively encouraging the development of local leadership and 'self-reliance' within the settlements in a move which indicates a degree of devolution and decentralisation of authority (Secretary, Department of Home, 16.11.2007). Ironically, however, where this local leadership is already strong, such as the case of Majnuka Tilla, TGiE appears to be uncomfortable and seeks to moderate it.

[85] These include a basic medical clinic, branch of *Men-tse-khang* (Tibetan medicine clinic) and Tibetan primary school.

Such power struggles are not unique to Majnuka Tilla and, more generally, it is important not to paint a picture of homogenous settlements, with TGiE having equal authority over each. On the one hand, a challenge to TGiE authority *within* the settlements also comes from the monasteries, which are largely autonomous institutions not falling directly under the settlement administration. Whilst monasteries have lost many of the important economic and political roles they had in Tibet (see Chapter 3), they remain vital institutions in the exile community, being the focus for much of the religious practice of the laity (Ström 1995) and are often wealthy and powerful. This is particularly the case in the large settlements in South India where the different sects of Tibetan Buddhism have re-established their main monasteries in exile.[86] These institutions fund infrastructure projects within the settlements and, in the case of Sera monastery in Bylakuppe, runs its own 'monk village' complete with agricultural land, housing, shops and clinics. However, though autonomous in many regards, the monasteries do ultimately come under the jurisdiction of the TGiE-run CROs and Settlement Offices, which monitor the arrival and departure of all monks in their region or settlement and have the final say on decision-making in these territories.[87]

On the other hand, several settlements besides Majnuka Tilla have been established and managed independently of TGiE. One such group of communities is the '13-Settlements' (*Tsogka Choksum*), a loose coalition of settlements established in the mid-1960s and populated mainly by refugees from Amdo, whose distrust of the Ü-Tsang dominated TGiE stemmed from historically strained relations between central and eastern Tibet.[88] The largest of the independent communities was Clementown, established by the 13-Settlements leader Gontang Tsultrim in 1964 on land donated to him by Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the spiritual successor of Mahatma Gandhi. The strained relationship with TGiE was expressed by an older resident when he explained that:

> 'In the early days the people asked for help from the Tibetan government but no help came... so people decided to do everything themselves so now we

[86] For example, Drepung and Ganden monasteries near Lhasa have been rebuilt in Mundgod settlement and Tashi Lhunpo in Shigatse re-established in Bylakuppe.
[87] For example, a lake in Lugsum-Samdupling is maintained by Sera monastery but the Settlement Office has the final say on construction projects, for instance, not permitting their building of a *chorten* on the bank side.
[88] This suspicion ran both ways with the TGiE critical of the 13-Settlements' independent operations and acceptance of funds from the Commission for Mongol and Tibetan Affairs in Taiwan, with the conflict intensifying during the 1970s (Ström 1995). Although the 13-Settlements coalition was disbanded and relations are much improved, this remains a sensitive issue within the exiled community.

> can continue to run the whole settlement and manage everything ourselves. The Tibetan government has some problems – I don't think they manage settlements right, so we made the decision to continue running our settlement ourselves, and for me I think we have been successful' (Jingme, 20.04.2007).

The settlement today continues to be run by the settlers with their 'Society', headed by the current Rimpoche of Mindrolling monastery, managing a school and two clinics, organising welfare stipends, dealing with Indian authorities and receiving revenue from property rentals and land sales. Its administration therefore functions in a way similar to that of other settlements, but without the TGiE-imposed Local Assembly and Local Justice Commission. Significantly, the settlement has a very different 'feel' from Dekyiling, the TGiE-run settlement on the other side of Dehradun. The former is wealthier, with fewer restrictions regarding who can move into the settlement,[89] and settlers expressed a greater attachment to the settlement, perhaps because they chose to move there rather than, in the case of Dekyiling, being sent there by TGiE.

Whilst there is no obvious TGiE presence within Clementown, the settlement does now come under the jurisdiction of the Uttarakhand CRO and the Secretary of the Society was keen to point out that the Chief Representative regularly visits the settlement and many of the settlers now pay *chatrel* (voluntary contributions) to the TGiE. The 13-Settlements movement itself declined in the 1980s with a 'general tendency towards a new perception of national unity and the need for a centralised administration [and] an institutionalised and democratic system of government' (Ström 1995: 94). Most of the settlements are now re-integrated into the 'mainstream' of Tibetan refugee society under the authority of TGiE, a trend which can be read, as several interviewees pointed out, as TGiE and its institutions becoming progressively more powerful and spatially-extended. These 'independent' settlements therefore illustrate both the inherent fragility of TGiE authority and the territorialising strategies it uses in its attempts to bring 'wayward' settlements under its control.

This process of administrative integration is highly significant, with the extension of TGiE's presence and indeed governance into these disparate territories creating a relatively cohesive bureaucratic landscape. A similar picture emerges with regards to welfare provision (discussed in detail in Chapter 6), with TGiE striving

[89] Several Indians from Himalayan regions such as Ladakh, Sikkim and Lahaul also reside in the settlement.

to provide integrated and standardised provision of, and access to, health, education and welfare support services across its settlements in India:

> 'wherever possible we are trying to provide... at least in the case of welfare activities and education it's almost standard everywhere. They may not have a school there in that locality but they can send their children to the residential schools. In the welfare activities we almost provide the same for everywhere – standard like that' (Additional Secretary, Department of Home, 18.03.2006),
>
> 'we have twice yearly meetings of the Settlement Officers to discuss the major policies in the settlements and to make unanimous rules... so the same thing happening in all settlements. Standardised so there's no competition, no-one is saying one settlement is getting priority. Of course there are different personalities so some policies are implemented differently but we try to make equality [*sic*]' (Secretary, CRO Bangalore, 29.11.2007).

Such deliberately integrative policies are, in many regards, key to TGiE's attempts to establish a government-like apparatus and institutionalise and monopolise its authority over the exile population. Indeed, TGiE's integration of administrative hierarchies and welfare policies can be seen as techniques through which Dharamsala is able to act at a distance on, and stretch government across, its dispersed territories as a form of distanciated power (Allen 2003a). Moreover, whilst acknowledging that one of the great conceits (or deceits) of most state theory is 'the suggestion that the writ of London or New Delhi or Islamabad reaches without interruption... to the trenches that are at the bottom of the state hierarchy' (Corbridge *et al* 2005: 35), I want to argue here that it is TGiE's aspirations to such flows of authority that is particularly revealing. With regards to managing its dispersed settlements, TGiE employs what appears to be a conventionally state-like centralised and top-down articulation of power across its un-state-like territory. Importantly, as 'the production of legitimacy... requires constant enactment of the state as a symbolic centre of society, the source of governance, the arbiter of conflicts, the site of authorisation' (Hansen 2001: 225), this centralisation of power thereby establishes TGiE as a locus of authority.

Unpacking the relationship between territory and state power further, I also want to argue that it is the existence and fostering of defined Tibetan spaces in India which facilitates TGiE's functioning as a government. For a start, TGiE's development of a range of scalar networks through which its bureaucracy, welfare-provision and leadership structures are institutionalised uses the category of scale to establish hierarchical and reified power structures (Herb and Kaplan 1999).

Indeed, in many ways TGiE's structured bureaucratic control of its bounded spaces in exile echoes strongly Agnew's description of territoriality as working 'through territorial division of space, boundary control, and the hierarchical dissemination of authoritative commands' (2005: 442). As an example, when describing the spatial reach of their responsibilities, staff in CROs frequently spoke of various settlements, scattered communities, schools and monasteries as coming under their 'jurisdiction.' If the state is spatially understood as 'a nested hierarchy of discrete, enclosed jurisdictional spaces' (Cox 1998: 1), then this discursive construction of bureaucratic jurisdictions – the TGiE's lack of official sovereignty over these spaces meaning that is far from *legal* jurisdiction – can be seen as a conventionally state-like articulation of power over space. In addition, the series of spaces in exile in many ways facilitate TGiE's governance of its exiled population as the TGiE has partitioned its space in exile as a mechanism through which to observe, manage and govern its population in a way which motions towards Lefebvre's (1991) conceptualisation of the 'production of space'. Crucially, the network of territorial settlements functions as a spatial form of regulation, echoing Luke's observation that:

> 'Territories are... highly politicized formations inasmuch as they structure governmentality; they arrange people with vital systems of things as individuals and collectives, giving access to places used for getting security benefits, health services, identity codes and infrastructural goods' (1996: 503).

In the case of TGiE, such territorial governance of the diasporic population in India includes monitoring their movement, recording demographic data, collecting 'taxes', renewing identity documents and facilitating the provision of Tibetan-run welfare services (see Chapter 6 and 7).

5.3.3. Settlements in exile: nation, homeland and attachment to place.

What has been presented so far is an overview of the functional role of the settlements within the exile Tibetan community and the territorialising strategies which TGiE employs to manage and govern these spaces. I now want to shift attention to the symbolic importance of the settlements as 'national' spaces associated in complex ways with the homeland. Turning first to the discourses employed by TGiE to justify and promote the idea of Tibetan settlements in exile, in addition to the pragmatic aim of creating economically self-sufficient Tibetan communities within the host state, the rationale most frequently articulated is that of exclusively Tibetan settlements being a key way of protecting and preserving

Tibetan culture, traditions, identity and way of life (CTRC 2003: 7; Diehl 2002). 'Deliberately designed in such a way as to recreate Tibetan society with its core values intact' (Norbu 2001: 15), the settlements are therefore key to the exile government's project of reconstructing 'Tibet' in exile and, as the time in exile extends, they are increasingly seen as places where the community can pass on 'authentic' Tibetan culture and traditions to the next generation. Indeed, a number of interviewees spoke of the 'real Tibetan community' being in the settlements which are in effect spaces where 'Tibetans can be Tibetans' (Tsepak, Lugsum-Samdupling 25.11.2007).

An extension to such discourses of cultural preservation has been the recent promotion of Gandhian-based narratives regarding the settlements. With its antecedents in the Dalai Lama's vision for future Tibet as a 'zone of *ahimsa* (non-violence)' (TGiE 1992), this project has been formulated and promoted by the *Kalon Tripa* Samdhong Rimpoche, who explained in a statement to the press after taking office in 2001:

> 'I believe we Tibetans need to establish a non-violent society to serve as a model for the rest of the world. In order to do this, we should first develop a culture of *ahimsa* in our exile communities.... Tibetan settlements in India are ideal places for undertaking this experiment' (*Tibetan Bulletin* July-August 2001: 25).

Implementing this vision has to date entailed the promotion of organic farming, solar and wind energy projects, and soil and water conservation.[90] Crucially, such policies are presented as key to the wider TGiE project of using the period in exile as an opportunity to experiment with and train the diaspora in political systems and resource use which are in tune with Tibetan cultural values, and could be transferred to the homeland should the desired 'return' materialise. As such, the current *Kashag* presents the settlements as laboratories where a certain way of life can be trialled and cultivated. However, somewhat predictably, such visions of the settlements are not universally shared nor supported by the diasporic population. As my interviews revealed, many young Tibetans reject the closed, tight-knit Tibetan world of the settlements in favour of the employment opportunities and faster pace of life in Indian cities.

[90] Attention has focused on Mundgod settlement in Karnataka with the aim of establishing it as a model which can then be replicated in the other settlements and, somewhat idealistically, transplanted to a future Tibet (Agricultural Officer, Lugsum-Samdupling, 27.11.2007).

Remaining with the present, as part of its nation-building exercise and promotion of a pan-Tibetan identity, TGiE has adopted a policy of locating refugees from different regions in Tibet together in the same settlement (Ström 1995).[91] Such a deliberate nationalising project has obvious connections with the idea of homeland in terms of keeping the collective memory of Tibet alive through sustaining a cohesive national community in exile. In turn, as Gupta and Ferguson argue, place-making is ubiquitous in collective political mobilisation with '"homeland"... remain[ing] one of the most powerful unifying symbols for mobile and displaced peoples' (1992: 11). Therefore, through these discourses TGiE uses the spaces of the settlements to foster essentialised and nationalised Tibetan identities in exile (see Lavie and Swedenburg 1996; Veronis 2007). However, the connection between the settlements and the Tibetan nation and homeland is not only imposed by the TGiE nor only discursive. Reflecting the 'the complexity of... ways in which people construct, remember, and lay claim to particular places as "homelands" or "nations"' (Malkki 1992: 25), settlers themselves have also created the settlements as spaces of nationalism through important material and performative associations with the homeland.

Despite the majority of Tibetan settlements in India being located in physical landscapes and environments starkly different from those of Tibet, each settlement is 'Tibetanised' through the recurrent use of Buddhist icons and structures and Tibetan architectural styles (see Larsen and Siding-Larsen 2001 for a fascinating account of traditional Tibetan architecture). In addition to the cluster of Tibetan offices, schools and clinics which form the heart of each settlement, these include the monasteries, small temples for the protector deity of each village, archways decorated with auspicious Tibetan symbols, prayer-flags atop each building and strung through trees, and *chortens* and *mani*-stones along roadsides (see Figure 5.g, 5.h and 5.i). The consistency of these structures across different settlements is strikingly evident as while the architectural style of the houses reflects the building materials and climate of their location within India, the unfailing recurrence of these cultural markers means each settlement can be read in a similar way, and feels 'familiar' to exiled Tibetans. As such, Majnuka Tilla is frequently described by newcomer refugees as a reassuring Tibetan 'sanctuary' within the very Indian – and therefore alien – city of Delhi. Thus, in reading the

[91] However, it should be noted that even within TGiE-run settlements, segregation of regional and sectarian groups does occur. For example, followers of the Bön faith are congregated in 2 of the 11 camps in Sonamling, and there is a large Amdo 'village' within Dharamsala.

landscape of the settlements as socially constructed 'cultural texts through which political values are communicated and discourses enacted within particular societies' (Till 2003: 349), the playing out of these symbolic links to the homeland can be seen as vindicating the TGiE's settlement programme, if only in succeeding in the aim of recreating a 'mini' Tibet in exile.

Figure 5.g: Chortens, Lugsum-Samdupling

Figure 5.h: Large prayer-wheel, Dharamsala

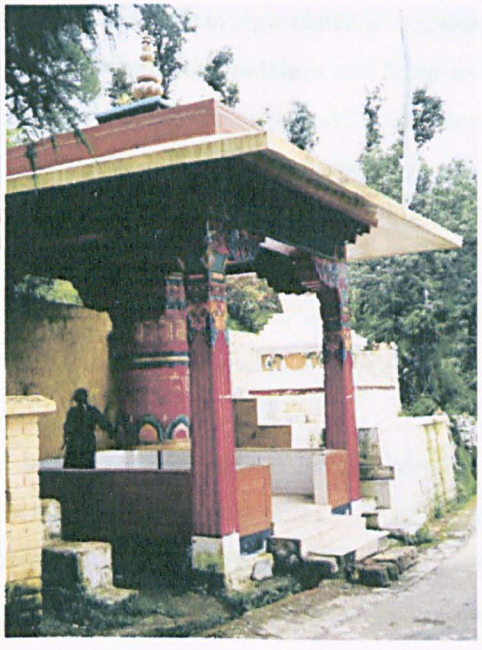


Figure 5.i: Mani stones

The inscription of the Tibetan homeland onto the landscape of the settlements is not confined simply to the material environment, but is also evident in the everyday practices performed within these spaces. Following Houston and Wright's argument that the interpretation of return within a diaspora 'does not invoke a physical return to a homeland, but rather a repeated revisiting to the concept of homeland via texts, imagery and social and religious rituals' (2003: 230), a focus on the experiential and performative aspects of landscape can be highly instructive (Hirsch 1995). For example, the social geography of the settlements is often more complex than first meets the eye. In a number of settlements there is an unofficial division of communities into 'villages' based on where the settlers are from in Tibet, and it is this which determines how individuals read and interact with their local landscape (Thokmey, Sonamling 28.05.2007). These 'villages' are often indiscernible to outsiders, who require a 'local guide' to negotiate these hidden geographies of Amdo, Toepa and Ngari areas within the settlements. Moreover, this constitutes a key alternative geography within each settlement to that instituted by TGiE in its establishment of equally-sized administrative blocks.

Another key way in which the landscape of the settlements is lived and performed by its inhabitants is the traditional Tibetan practice of *kora*, a circumambulation of a temple or holy structure which is performed to venerate these sites and gain merit for the next life. *Koras* are central to Tibetans' use and understanding of space with *kora* routes around *chortens*, temples and monasteries constituting 'ritual space' within the settlements. Even as a non-Tibetan visitor to the settlements these routes and practices of *kora* are significant; from dictating a clockwise detour around a prayer-flag bedecked tree to how to exit a monastery. Moreover, with sacred sites along the route serving as informal meeting places, especially for elderly residents, doing *kora* myself provided an invaluable insight into the lived geographies of these communities. With the Dalai Lama's temple and residence located there, Dharamsala has the most well defined *kora* of the settlements in exile. As Klieger notes, this 'capital' of Tibet in exile has a heavily scripted landscape as it is:

> 'a place where memories and nostalgia for a lost way of life are perpetuated as no other... . The Dalai Lama's palace on the top of the hill, with Namgyal monastery and the Tsuglhakhang nearby, with the people's village down the road, neatly reproduces the landscape of Lhasa itself... . Such simulation is powerful and highly useful as a mnemonic of the golden days of pre-1959 Tibet' (2002: 3).

As a 'reprocessing of popular religious practices' and 'version of the living memory' (Fortier 1999: 50, 51) the tradition and practice of *kora* therefore adds another layer to the Tibetanisation of these landscapes and reinforces the argument that nationalism requires some sort of territorial base in order to be articulated (Smith 1981).

However, this relationship between the settlements, nationalism and homeland is further complicated in this case. Not only have the settlements been constructed and performed as a series of temporary homelands in exile – islands of Tibetanness established in order to preserve the 'original' homeland in the imagination – but these Tibetan spaces in India in effect constitute a second or pseudo homeland. This is especially the case for second generation Tibetans who have moved from India to the West, for whom the network of Tibetan settlements in India, the array of cultural and educational institutions and the seat of the Dalai Lama, are in effect a surrogate spatial grounding for these individuals who have never seen the historic homeland. Such a displacement of ideas of 'homeland' requires a shift in conventional frames of reference. Whilst in essence Tibetans in exile are as a whole a diasporic population, the role of TGiE and its base in India has effectively created a 'domestic' population (those residing in Tibetan spaces in India and Nepal) and a (second) diaspora of Tibetans who have moved from South Asia to the West. As such, TGiE acts as a 'home state,' managing the transnational practices of their diaspora in the West: remittances flowing back to India; participation in TPiE elections; and the acquiring of 'dual' citizenship. This is therefore a situation which fundamentally dislocates conventional understandings of diaspora and territory, thereby confirming the assertion that exile politics disrupts the division between national and international politics, between the inside and the outside (Mandaville 1999).

This construction of the settlements as pseudo homelands is articulated and materialised in a number of ways. On one level there is a logical attachment to the area or settlement where those born in India have grown up. This was expressed by a number of my younger interviewees through support for sports teams in inter-settlement tournaments, alumni associations for settlement schools and websites connecting those who have emigrated to the West with their 'home settlement' (e.g. www.mainpat.net). Similarly, in the case of Dharamsala, Prost notes the development of a:

> 'distinctly "Dharamsalian" exile culture, with its own idiomatic language, local community networks... . As the Tibetan exiles' recollection of their "homeland" past becomes grounded in their experience of an "exile" present, it takes on new meanings and inspiration from Dharamsala as a contemporary nexus of identity' (2006: 236).

More prosaic connections and attachments with spaces and places in exile are also evident, with an increasing investment in land and property by some within the exile community. A number of interviewees in Dekyiling, Clementown and Lugsum-Samdupling commented on how having a property in a settlement was seen as providing financial and, to a certain extent, emotional security. Whilst the land within the settlements is managed exclusively by TGiE, cannot be exchanged privately and reverts to TGiE if or when the family leaves, there is an increasing trend of Tibetans investing in and expanding their homes and, in some cases, informally leasing additional land from local Indians.

Such emotive and material attachments to and appropriations of places and property in exile not only refutes any argument that diasporic relations to territory are confined merely to the imaginary and the nostalgic, but highlights an important and pressing issue within the community. What was intended as a temporary sojourn in exile is becoming increasingly permanent. This uprooted diasporic community is increasingly growing roots (see Malkki 1992; Fortier 1999). As such, this raises the crucial question of how easy and desirable it will be for the exiled community to 'up sticks' and leave India for Tibet should the situation in the homeland be resolved. One view, articulated by a young college graduate as we walked around the extensive grounds of Upper TCV (Tibetan Children's Village school) in Dharamsala was that:

> 'Of course we will leave India if one day we have a free Tibet. When the Chinese invaded our people left everything behind and said that they'd be back in a few years – it's the same here. As we say, "if it's written on your forehead then you go" – these are just buildings. People have a stronger attachment to their homeland... even those like me who have never seen it. So of course we will leave here and go back' (Dechen, 01.04.2007).

However, other interviewees were sceptical that such an upheaval would be easy or even possible, arguing instead that the exiled community and TGiE has become too established and comfortable in exile to the detriment of the greater project of fighting (in whatever way) for the future of the homeland. Indeed, opposition to forming attachments to places in exile has been a recurrent issue within the community, with an older resident in Dharamsala explaining how:

> 'when land was first given to the Tibetans in South [India] the people they begged our leaders not to give them land. They thought you see... that having land in India, it would mean they would not return to Tibet, that they would always be in India' (Yonten, 19.02.2006).

Such fears of putting down roots in exile continue within the community today, even from those born in India. For example, one politically active interviewee in Dharamsala explained how, though enviously admiring the houses in Kangra Valley below Dharamsala, he refuses to own anything in India and it is this maintenance of a state of limbo and uncertainty which he claims helps inspire his dedication to the Tibetan freedom struggle (Ngawang, 14.03.2007). Such decisions – to rent rather than own property, to be mobile rather than settled – which are repeated often within the community, can therefore be seen as deliberate deterritorialising strategies. In directly contradicting current TGiE policies of (re)settlement, these beliefs and actions indicate that for some within the exile community the balance has tipped too far in the direction of providing for and settling the exile population at the detriment of furthering the struggle for the homeland.

Intertwined with these spatial discourses of detachment from territory and the powerful desire to return – even if it is to a homeland those born in exile have never seen – are temporal narratives around the issue of waiting:

> 'the very goal of going into exile is but to refill our water bags and restock our armory so that we might return home to finish the fight with renewed vigor. But in the case of our exile, something else happened: we came, we saw, we stayed... After fifty years of waiting, we are still here – essentially waiting. Waiting for what?' (Sherap 18 January 2007 www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=15363&article=Escape+from+Exile).

As Jeffrey (2008) notes, the phenomenon of 'chronic waiting' is an increasingly important experience for a number of subaltern communities including asylum seekers, refugees, urban slum dwellers, and the unemployed. From my time spent in the various Tibetan settlements, waiting as 'an active, conscious, materialized practice in which... time and space often become the objects of reflection' (*ibid*: 957) was a recurrent issue, particularly among newcomer refugees and unemployed college graduates. Central to this, and echoing Chakrabarty's (1999) work on the inscription of waiting on the urban landscape, were particular spaces within the settlements such as tea stalls, pool tables, *karom* boards and bed-sits where large groups of notably male Tibetans would regularly 'hang out'. These individuals

spoke of such places as simply for 'time-pass.' They were places to put in the hours, days, months, or even years before they get their chance to return to Tibet, or emigrate to the West. Dharamsala in particular is dominated by these gendered spaces of 'time-pass' which have in many ways shaped the distinctive 'Dhasa' subculture noted above. Majnuka Tilla is a site of waiting in another sense, as its possible demolition (discussed below) means that the settlers feel paralysed, reluctant to invest in their businesses and homes until they know its future, but equally unwilling to move in case that seals the colony's fate.

Indeed, the uncertainties around Majnuka Tilla are emblematic of key moments and circumstances which jolt the increasingly settled exile community into remembering that they are 'refugees' and are in India on a temporary, and often uncertain and insecure basis. The settlements can therefore be seen as inherently ambiguous spaces; as condensation points for these exilic contradictions, where the debates and realities of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, of temporality and permanence are played out and become visible. Therefore, whilst the situation of any exiled population is exemplified by the dilemma between meeting immediate needs and therefore starting to put down roots in exile, and retaining the emotional and political desire to return home by maintaining a sense of restlessness, in the Tibetan case the discourses and practices through which these debates are played out are intricately linked to broader issues of territory and governance. This predicament is manifest both on the level of the individual (as outlined above) and the exiled administration itself. In terms of the latter, this can be epitomised by reading Beker and van Oordt's observation that 'the formation of quasi-state structures in a sanctuary can only provide a temporary solution' (1993: 9) against French's claim that 'a government-in-exile that institutionalises itself as the Tibetan government has runs the risk of becoming a permanent government-of-exiles' (1991: 200).

5.4. The 'lived' and the 'legal': Tibetan settlements within the sovereign territory of India

Focusing on the administrative, discursive and symbolic position of the Tibetan settlements within the Tibetan community and government in exile, the discussions above have perhaps painted too cohesive an image of these exilic spaces, and certainly one which tells only part of the story. The aim of this section is to disrupt this picture by widening the focus to look at how the settlements

function within the sovereign space of India. In exploring how the juxtaposition between the lived realities of the settlements and their legal status within India plays out, this section will explore land tenure issues, the relationship between TGiE and Indian officials at a range of scales, inter-communal relations and tensions and how the legal and physical boundaries of the settlements are defined and enforced. These issues therefore open up salient theoretical questions regarding the division of juridical responsibilities, the exile administration's degree of autonomy within the domestic arena of the host, the extent to which TGiE is regarded as a 'government' on a day-to-day basis and the possibility of overlapping sovereignties.

5.4.1. Land, law and community relations: the ongoing negotiation of Tibetan presence in India.

Starting with some legal 'realities,' the state of India has not ceded jurisdiction in the Tibetan settlements. This remains Indian territory, where Indian law applies and where the Indian Government is the ultimate authority (Goldstein 1975). Settlement land is on lease from respective Indian states to the TGiE, varying from 99-year leases to renewable shorter term leases depending on the legal agreement with the federal state, and settlers pay land revenue at rates fixed by each regional administration (Chief Representative, Ladakh, 25.05.2007). However, no such collective land grant exists in the scattered communities and even the TGiE is a tenant on land rented from the state of Himachal Pradesh (Dharamsala Welfare Officer 04.04.2007).

In terms of private land ownership, as the Indian Constitution gives land property rights to citizens only and the majority of Tibetans in India have chosen to retain their refugee status (see Chapter 7), these individuals are barred from owning land in India. However, some Tibetans have circumvented this limitation either through informal rental arrangements or, in Himachal Pradesh, through what is known as a *benami* transaction where land is illegally purchased in the name of a silent Indian partner, often from ethnically Tibetan tribal regions of Spiti or Lahaul. However, in a move to regularise these land transactions and as 'a special welfare measure keeping in view the Government of India's policy guidelines regarding resettlement/ rehabilitation of Tibetan refugees' (Order No.Rev.B.F.(10)199/2003, 8th May 2006), the Himachal government issued 50-year land leases to TGiE in 2005 which the exile government can then sub-lease to institutions or Tibetan individuals (District Commissioner, Kangra 07.11.2007).

Turning to the relationship between the Indian and Tibetan administrations, although never formally recognising TGiE as a government, from the early days of exile the GoI welcomed the delegation of responsibility for the Tibetan settlements offered by TGiE, granting it a virtual monopoly to represent the refugees and, as discussed below, *de facto* internal administrative control of and authority over the settlements (Norbu 2001). Thus, whilst in the first few years the Indian administration was ultimately in control of the settlements – first through the Ministry for External Affairs and then the Ministry of Rehabilitation and quasi-official 'Central Relief Committee' (Grunfeld 1987) – over time authority gradually transferred to the Tibetan administration as they consolidated their governmental structures.

With regards to the relationship between these two administrations today, it was apparent from interviews with both Tibetan and Indian officials that a structured and hierarchical set of interactions have been established. Each level of the Tibetan administration is in touch with corresponding levels of administration within the Indian state. At the 'national' level the Tibetan Bureau in Delhi acts as a liaison between TGiE and GoI, dealing directly with ministries in the Indian central administration. Meanwhile, at the federal state level the CROs have contact with the Chief Minister and co-ordinate with the State Government, Divisional Commissioners and City Corporations where Tibetans are resident. Finally, for day-to-day issues arising within the settlements there is regular contact between the Tibetan Settlement Offices and Indian District Commissioners, Municipal Council, Superintendents of Police and local *panchayats*.[92]

In terms of how the relationship between these two administrations is presented and actually 'works', the picture is complex and revealing. Framed within official discourses on both sides as a relationship between a generous host and a grateful guest, a rosy picture of good working relations was painted by Indian and Tibetan officials at a range of levels. For example, from the Indian perspective the District Commissioner of Kangra stressed that 'the quality of the relationship is good. It has always been good – very cordial at all times with a good level of respect'

[92] In light of these structured interactions between Tibetan and Indian administrations the TGiE's administrative structures (and its increasing bureaucratisation) can be read as increasingly emulating the Indian model; both because this is the bureaucracy TGiE is most exposed to, and it is the bureaucracy it has to work with on a daily basis.

(07.11.2007), whilst Tibetan officials spoke of having tea with state-level ministers, and middle-ranking Indian civil servants regarding them as friends and partners. Indeed, illustrating the extent to which Tibetan exiles have engaged with Indian political mores and hierarchies within official Tibetan circles, considerable fuss is made about official visits of Indian dignitaries to the Tibetan settlements, and the ensuing functions result in gushing praise and gratitude on both sides. However, probe a little further and the relationship between these 'governments' emerges as often highly contradictory, unstable and almost impossible to pin-down. Picking apart this 'messiness', it became apparent that there remain significant sensitivities regarding how Indo-Tibetan relations are portrayed, with officials on both sides keen to play down tensions and skirt around legal issues. [93]

With regards to the nature of the relationship between local level officials, important contradictions are apparent. On the one hand, the mutual recognition of the other administration's hierarchies can be read as an implicit recognition, on the Indian part, of TGiE existing and functioning as a government-like structure. This tacit conferral of legitimacy is enacted through the reiteration of a series of procedures and discourses. For example, Indian officials spoke of the 'Tibetan government' having their entire system in India; 'they are established here with offices, ministries, parliament, their Prime Minister' (Assistant to Superintendent of Police, Priyapatna, 25.11.2007). From the Tibetan perspective TGiE, officials frequently recounted how they and their office were recognised by their Indian counterparts, how they were treated as 'local representatives for the Tibetans' (Local Assembly member, Dharamsala, 06.04.2007) and were the first port of call for local Indian officials. Indeed, evidence of the currency of 'official' titles and the perceived social status that they bestow was apparent when, in acknowledging the very significant limitations her government faces, a researcher in the DIIR explained that;

> 'our government can't help or intervene for its citizens officially because we are in India, they can only do it unofficially as a Tibetan helping a Tibetan. But at the local level sometimes saying you are from the "Tibetan Government", or especially from the "Dalai Lama's government", this makes the local Indian officials listen and can help the Tibetan's case' (Loten, 02.03.2007).

[93] For example, the District Commissioner of Kangra was concerned to know whether I was working 'for them' meaning TGiE, and was guarded in his response to questions regarding tensions between the communities.

On the other hand, however, the caveats that must accompany these statements are revealing. First, it is significant that it is from Indian bureaucrats at sub-state levels that such 'recognition' of Tibetan officials as 'government representatives' comes. As the connection between Tibetan and Indian officials at this level is that of everyday working relationships, this 'recognition' is necessary for bureaucratic interactions but is not necessarily a statement on the political and legal status of TGiE itself. This is very different from how Indian politicians at the national level refer to TGiE, with the latter being cautious in the terminology they use and its implied legitimising possibilities (see TPPRC 2006b). Secondly, even at the local level, it is a notably unequal relationship. For example, whilst TGiE offices might be the primary point of contact Indian officials have with the 'local' Tibetan community, in reality they rarely actually visit Tibetan offices. Rather, it is Tibetan officials who have to 'report in' with their Indian counterparts. So, for instance, it is up to the Settlement Officer in Lugsum-Samdupling to bring records of births and deaths in the settlement to the Assistant Commissioner in Hunsur (who acts as the Tibetan liaison officer), rather than the Indian authorities conducting their own census or collecting population data from the Settlement Office.

The relationship between the Tibetan and Indian administrations also varies over time and space. A common narrative within the exile community is that there are better relations in Karnataka than in the northern states and, as the duration in exile lengthens, relations are arguably becoming less stable. As an Indian journalist explained:

> 'things are changing in India and soon the position of the Tibetans here might not be so secure. Tibetans cannot expect to be treated in the same way here over time. The Indian officials dealing with Tibetans to date have been those who remember the Tibetans first arriving as refugees when they had nothing and had to struggle to make a life in India. Like... when I was a child all Tibetans we saw in Darjeeling were beggars. And these officials have always been generous and understanding to the Tibetans because of their past, but soon these officials will retire from office and the second generation of Indians won't have this institutional memory. They have no memory of Tibetans as 'beggars' – all they see is successful refugees who are good at business and have a lot of help from India. So they're not going to be as sympathetic and understanding, especially when the Tibetans make no effort to assimilate' (Manoj, Delhi 11.11.2007).

Indeed, many Tibetan commentators see the position of their exile community in India as inherently vulnerable, with their political and territorial stability

contingent on Sino-Indian relations, the future of the Dalai Lama as an individual and an institution and the socio-economic and legal position of Tibetans in India. An important example of such insecurity is found in Majnuka Tilla. Whilst lease papers for most settlements are held by TGiE, in Majnuka Tilla the land was granted to the community directly by Jawaharlal Nehru, but this was based on an oral understanding and no papers were issued. This has led to a number of recent problems as the Delhi Development Authority issued court summonses in 2006 to clear the land alongside the Yamuna River, where the colony is located, as part of a beautification scheme (Sharma 22 September 2006). With no evidence to prove the legality of the colony, demolition is still pending despite support from the Delhi Government and numerous petitions from senior TGiE officials to the city's High Court (Secretary, Majnuka Tilla Welfare Office, 04.06.2007).[94]

Remaining with legal issues, the Tibetan administration and settlers are subject to Indian jurisdiction, with the Indian Police having authority for law and order within the settlements and any criminal matters being dealt with by the Indian courts rather than Tibetan judiciary. Indeed, whilst structured as and attempting to function as a judiciary, the Tibetan Justice Commission in reality has the legal standing only of an arbitration body operating under the Indian Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996 (Rohit, 06.12.2007).[95] Such a division of legal responsibilities between the two administrations, with TGiE dealing with civil disputes and GoI with criminal cases, is in many ways mutually beneficial. On the one hand, Tibetans benefit from India's legal pluralism whereby minority communities are granted the freedom to regulate family and succession issues according to customary norms. This is particularly important in the Tibetan case where keeping family and intra-community disputes within the diaspora is seen by TGiE as key to preserving community harmony and cohesion. On the other hand, the devolution of dispute resolution to TGiE means that the already over-stretched Indian justice system is not burdened by such grievances.

Whilst this division of juridical responsibilities is clear-cut at the national level, on the ground it is predictably more ambiguous. In general, settlement-level Tibetan officials ensure that their communities receive, understand and comply with Indian laws such as those governing residence certificates and business licenses and act as

[94] At the time of writing the demolition case remains pending at the Delhi High Court.
[95] Indeed, in acknowledgement of its being subject to the overriding authority of Indian law, the judiciary is referred to as a 'commission', rather than a court. This forms part of a wider trend in TGiE semantics which will be discussed in Chapter 9.

intermediaries between Tibetan settlers and a range of Indian officials. So, for example, if Indian cattle wander onto Tibetan land, Tibetan farmers go to their Settlement Officer who contacts local Indian officials, who in turn approach the offending local farmers. Similarly, if local Indians have grievances with Tibetans they can in person, or through their *panchayat*, approach the Settlement Office who will then take up the issue with the settler concerned (Kawa, 19.04.2007). However, there are situations where local Indians prefer to deal directly with the Tibetan administration, both in terms of ease of access and wanting to avoid formal legal proceedings. This was the case in Dharamsala in 2007 when, following community tensions after a fracas between an auto-rickshaw driver and newcomer refugee, Tibetans in the area boycotted Indian taxis and shops. Instead of approaching their local *panchayat*, concerned Indian shopkeepers petitioned the Dharamsala Welfare Office directly which called a public meeting and successfully defused the situation (Indo-Tibetan Coordinator, Dharamsala Welfare Office, 20.04.2007).

Turning to this relationship between Tibetans and Indians at a community level, given the duration of the Tibetan refugee stay in India the occurrence of communal tension and violence has been surprisingly rare. In general, interactions between the refugees and the host population are limited to everyday economic transactions and the creation of significant job opportunities for local Indians as labourers on Tibetan farms and workers in Tibetan cafés, restaurants and carpet factories can be seen as a major factor in ameliorating community relations (Additional Secretary, Department of Home, 18.03.2006. See also Norbu 2004).[96] In addition, Tibetan-run health facilities and schools extend their services to locals, and investment in local infrastructure has a trickle down effect on surrounding host villages, both of which are positive reinforcements to cooperation in general. As the Principal of TCV Sonamling explained:

> 'We do take some Ladakhi students in our school. The local community in this area is a poor community with little services, and there have been some problems with the Tibetans because they saw them come as refugees and stay in tents and now they are more successful. So sometimes there is some tension and so we admit some of their children so as to help these relations' (21.05.2007).

[96] This division of labour with Tibetans generally run shops, cafes, travel agencies and hotels while Indians in the settlements are construction workers, farm labourers, vegetable sellers and rickshaw drivers has arguably created a two tier-society, often replicating Indian caste structures.

However, since the Tibetan settlements are often enclaves of visible affluence compared to the host communities, and there is resistance to community integration on both sides, there have been inter-ethnic disputes and isolated incidents of anti-Tibetan violence. Whilst in Ladakh such tensions arise from the economic protectionism of the powerful local unions which oppose Tibetans acquiring licences for hotels, taxis and travel agencies (Penpa, 19.05.2007) it is in Himachal Pradesh where inter-communal problems have been most acute. This is due both to increased economic competition between the refugees and host community and, given a number of cultural commonalities, the Tibetans are sometimes perceived as politically threatening (Norbu 2001). The most notorious incident occurred in Dharamsala in April 1994 when an Indian youth was allegedly killed by a Tibetan refugee, sparking a violent riot against the Tibetan community during which the TGiE headquarters and many Tibetan shops and homes were ransacked and looted. Striking at the heart of Tibetan vulnerability, as Dhondup noted at the time, the incident was a 'rude awakening for the Tibetans in Dharamsala: an awakening to a reality long suppressed or simply forgotten. Tibetans have come as refugees and are expected to live as refugees' (*Tibetan Review* 1994 29(7): 18).

Despite being a distinctly traumatic event, this disturbance also had constructive outcomes in terms of inter-communal relations as it saw the establishment of bridging associations such as Indo-Tibetan Friendship Associations in the areas where Tibetans have settled. Consisting of community leaders and representatives, these organisations have been instrumental in fostering cooperation and trust. The qualified success of this strategy was apparent in 2007 when, after the autorickshaw incident mentioned above, leaders from the two communities held formal meetings and organised public apologies from the parties involved, although some Tibetans and Indians I spoke to at the time were keen to point out that such public displays of unity did not fully resolve the issue and that tensions between the communities remained.

5.4.2. Defining settlement boundaries and delimiting sovereign space

Turning to the issue of settlement boundaries a complex picture emerges, with their demarcation varying in different areas within India. At one end of the spectrum is Sonamling settlement in Ladakh where, given the similarities between the Tibetan and local Ladakhi population, boundaries are barely demarcated, with no gateways or signs to mark the entrance to the camps. As such, apart from the

TGiE 'branded' schools and clinics, Tibetan and Ladakhi villages are often indistinguishable and Sonamling itself is not a contiguous settlement, with land between the 14 camps belonging to Ladakhi farmers and Indian military units. In the large agricultural settlements at Bylakuppe, given the extent of the land-holdings the boundaries were somewhat 'fuzzier' than the smaller settlements around Dehradun. Nevertheless, the limits of the settlement were defined and recognised both by Tibetan settlers and local Indians. At Lugsum-Samdupling, these boundaries are marked by the Mysore-Kushalnagar highway on one side, impenetrable jungle on the other where the settlement road simply ends, and in areas where the settlement bounds Indian land, there is the striking sight of the settlement roads at dusk full of Indian labourers leaving the Tibetan area and returning to their villages beyond the settlement boundary. Finally, in the settlements around Dehradun there are clearly marked walls and fences between Tibetan and neighbouring Indian land and with prayer-flags adorning the roofs these settlements are visible from afar, standing out in the Indian landscape. In addition, the entrance to each settlement is marked by decorative archways, visible 'border posts' which children learn in school represents the difference between what is Indian land and what is Tibetan land (Kalsang, 22.04.2007).

Indeed, whilst unlike 'conventional' refugee camps there are no checkpoints or guarded entrances to Tibetan settlements, in certain circumstances and at key moments boundary enforcement practices are employed and the border between two communities of different legal standing sharpens into focus. From the Indian side, the movement of Tibetan residents in and out of the settlement is monitored. This is not a daily policing, but rather when families leave settlements such as Lugsum-Samdupling for their winter sweater-selling they must, through the Settlement Officer, seek permission to leave from' the local Assistant Commissioner, and then register their return in the settlement at the end of the season. Yet this is not a one-way enforcement of settlement boundaries, as TGiE officials do monitor and regulate what can and cannot happen on settlement territory. As an example, when staying in Dekyiling two Indian charity collectors came into the settlement seeking donations, but were promptly told to report to the Settlement Office to seek permission to solicit contributions. The settlement boundaries can therefore be seen to be 'materialised and territorialised in everyday life through performative place-making practices' (Jones 2007: 56).

In terms of the provision of services, in general Tibetans have little control over utilities. Electricity and telephone lines are provided by Indian utilities companies, water is usually provided by state government (although sometimes by pumps constructed by the settlers) and the Indian post office and Indian banks have branch offices on the outskirts of larger Tibetan settlements. In terms of other physical infrastructure, land drainage and levelling, flood protection and the construction and maintenance of buildings within the settlements is managed predominantly by TGiE, albeit with external funding. With regards to roads, those connecting to Indian communities are usually constructed by the state government, but roads within the settlement are often laid and maintained by TGiE. However, there have been cases of permission for roads being denied. For example, the *panchayat* at Selaqui near Dehradun granted a lease for the land between the TCV schools established there and the highway, but have denied permission for the construction of a tarred road, leaving the TCV administration with two large and fully operational residential schools, and inadequate access to them (Pemba, 16.04.2007). This dependence on Indian authorities for the provision of key services means that Tibetan autonomy within India is necessarily limited and the settlements are not (and cannot be) fully self-sufficient.

However, whilst far from hermetically sealed communities, the bounded nature of the settlements is key to the construction of identity narratives (Newman and Paasi 1998). Not only are the homogenously Tibetan settlements central to TGiE's nation-building project in exile (as discussed above), but separate settlements are also in Indian interests. This sanctioning of Tibetan settlements separated by social and cultural boundaries from the host society, corroborates and enacts India's liberal 'non-assimilative' framework (Goldstein 1978). For, whilst a highly multi-ethnic society, India is far from a 'melting-pot' and Tibetans are broadly regarded as a pseudo caste community which, within the framework of India's Hindu caste hierarchy, can maintain their cultural identity and practices (Norbu 2004). In addition, the settlement boundaries regulate interactions between Tibetans and Indians, thereby functioning as 'symbols and institutions that simultaneously produce distinctions between social groups and are produced by them' (Paasi 1998: 80; Mach 1993). On leaving settlements such as Lugsum-Samdupling and Dekyiling there is a distinct feeling of 'going back to India' and an impression that the settlement land is indeed 'Tibetan territory'. This is an impression which, despite its lack of legal underpinnings, is one sustained by both

Tibetan residents and local Indians. For example, whilst Indians are free to come and go in the settlements, as one student in Delhi explained:

> 'the first time I went to Majnuka Tilla I wasn't sure if I was allowed to go into there... . I mean if Indians were allowed to enter there. I thought that maybe the government has restrictions and that it is an area just for Tibetans' (Lalita, 10.04.2007).

Such confusion surrounding the legal status and identity claims of these Tibetan spaces within India raises important questions regarding sovereignty: To what extent do settlement boundaries delimit a *sovereign* space? What are the practical feasibilities of overlapping sovereignties? Does the establishment of an exile administration's authority coincide with a decrease of the host state's sovereignty? Whilst I will revisit these questions in the following chapters, I want here to start to sketch out some preliminary thoughts. Firstly, having started to unpack the connections between TGiE and GoI, what has emerged is a relationship where the boundaries of authority, legitimacy and legality are constantly negotiated and renegotiated. On the one hand, the fact that TGiE is not recognised as a government by India and the settlement land legally remains Indian territory means that the existence of the these islands of 'Tibetanness' providing 'social autonomy in a sea of host population' (Norbu 2004: 204) appears remarkable. On the other hand, the GoI's consensual delegation of authority and devolution of certain sovereign prerogatives to the exile administration effectively means that TGiE's governance over these spaces impinges little on the legal sovereignty of the host state. As such, this appears to be a matrix of complex territorial configurations and overlapping sites of authority.

5.5. Conclusion: sites of displaced sovereignty

In thinking through the issues raised in this chapter and how they relate back to, challenge and expand critical interpretations of territory, I want to begin by briefly sketching out what the exile Tibetan settlements are not. Firstly, these spaces bear few resemblances to the stereotypical refugee camp. Whilst not assimilating with the host state and to a degree dependent on humanitarian aid these are neither territories 'located outside the legal systems of the host countries... where the complete enjoyment of life and the rights implicit in it is suspended' nor 'seedbeds for the recruitment of soldiers and mercenaries' (Mbembe 2000: 270-271). Secondly, comparing Tibetan settlements to informal settlements in India, despite similarities in terms of insecurity, vulnerability and indeterminate legal status,

with their planned houses, roads and utilities and welfare services these are far from urban slums. Rather, what has emerged from the discussion in this chapter is a complex picture of extra-territorial enclaves which are neither permanent nor temporary and which have multiple connections to other Tibetan diasporic spaces, to the homeland of Tibet and to the local Indian communities.

Turning to the spatiality of the Tibetan community and government in exile more generally, readily apparent from the overview presented above is the complex political geography of TGiE and its diaspora. Running through the three spatial structures outlined in Section 5.3 are complex and conflicting accounts of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation: from conventionally diasporic de-territorialised networks, through (re)territorialisation of TGiE's governance in the settlements and the territorialised attachments to these spaces, to the rejection of such territorialisation in favour of maintaining a sense of rootlessness in exile. On the one hand, the importance of mobility, communication flows and nostalgic associations with the homeland signals an archetypal diasporic version of territory, 'challenging our received notions of place, disrupting those normative spatial temporal units of analysis like nation and culture' (Lavie and Swedenburg 1996: 14). However, ideas and theorisations of deterritorialisation and diaspora space fall far short of exposing the spatiality of the exiled Tibetan community, ignoring important material attachments to and appropriation of territory in exile. Indeed, with its territorialised system of settlements and administrative hierarchies the spatiality of the Tibetan community in South Asia is in many ways remote from post-foundational conceptualisations of diasporic and transnational territory. As such, this case corroborates with critiques of deterritorialisation which argue that its tendency to privilege flows, networks and mobility obscures and undervalues more rooted and material conceptions of and connections to political space (e.g. Mitchell 1997a, 1997b; Veronis 2007).

On the other hand, coming to this case from the perspective of state territoriality, TGiE's (re)territorialising strategies have important resonances with state power and state space (Brenner *et al* 2003; Jessop *et al* 2008) and can offer important tangential interjections into such debates. In unpacking the relationship between governance and territory in this case, I have argued that TGiE can be seen to employ a number of state-like territorialising mechanisms to circumvent and ameliorate the challenges raised by governing non-contiguous and dispersed territories. These include the centralisation of authority in Dharamsala, strategic

attempts to ensure uniformity of governance and facilities across the settlements and the creation of multiple-tiered jurisdictions and administrative networks at different scales through which state functions are performed. Through these territorialising strategies, therefore, TGiE is actively creating and controlling space and striving to institutionalise the Tibetan nation in exile at a range of scales. However, as explored throughout this research, given its sovereign limitations and lack of legal statehood this is far from a conventional case of state sovereignty operating over absolute, bounded territory. Moreover, in supporting the assertion that territory is neither the sole preserve of the state, nor 'inherently tied to the state' (Elden 2005: 8; Agnew 2005), the aim of TGiE's territorialising strategies can be seen to be based on a specific set of exilic objectives; community cohesion, preserving Tibetan culture and identity and fostering a sense of Tibetan nationalism. Carrying with it notions of a deliberate strategy of 'creating' territory in the exiled population's imagination, 'strategic territorialisation' (Boudreau 2001) is a useful framework for understanding how TGiE manipulates notions of territory for tactical political goals, reflecting Paasi's claim that the institutionalisation of territories is a 'process where territorial units... become established in the social consciousness' (2003: 112).

The TGiE's construction of territory and power can thus be seen to be somewhere *between* state space and diaspora space, articulating 'deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation at the same time in the same spaces' (Ó Tuathail and Luke 1994: 382). To use Deleuze and Guattari's description of the Hutu nation, the TGiE has 're-territorialized itself precisely in displacement, in a refugee camp' (1987: 508). Thinking beyond binaries of deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation, national/transnational, homeland/diaspora enables us to consider instead the notion of *displaced* sovereignties. Involving 'thinking through re-figurations of the geographies of place, settlement and belonging' (Jackson *et al* 2004: 7), exilic displacement and the idea of displaced sovereignties breaks down the assumed correlation of sovereignty with a single bounded territory, and instead opens up the idea of sovereignty associated with multiple geographies; some 'real' and others symbolic or imagined. Indeed, as explored above, tensions between sovereignty rooted in and articulated over 'real' territories, and symbolic links to a distant homeland tap into the essence of TGiE's spatialised authority and the core dilemmas of life in exile; between retaining the desire to return home and the community becoming increasingly rooted in exile. Moreover, such unbundling of sovereignty, territory and statehood (Ruggie 1993; Anderson 1996) is crucial to

understanding both TGiE's articulations of territoriality and the status and lived realities of Tibetan settlements as extra-territorial enclaves in India. As outlined in the second part of this chapter, Tibetan settlements function as territorial exceptions within the sovereign state of India with TGiE's de facto sovereignty within these spaces functional through the creation of 'fictions' of sovereignty. The TGiE is re-bundling these elements in a new configuration: a sovereignty with a substantively reconfigured – indeed 'displaced' – relationship to territory, which is often more symbolic than real, and that is overlapping and unstable. And it is ideas of sovereignty, governance and governmentality that I want to remain with in the next chapter as I shift attention to TGiE's relationship with its diasporic population in terms its management of lives and livelihoods.

Chapter 6
Governing Lives and Livelihoods: Constructing a Population, Welfare State and Economy in Exile.

> *'modern governmentality can be identified by a particular regime of government that takes as its object "the population" and is coincident with the emergence of political economy... . Thus government involves the health, welfare, prosperity and happiness of the population.'*
>
> (Dean 1999: 19)

> *'We count 122,078 in exile; females make 44.2% of our population; 74.4% of our people can read and write; 26% of our people work; only 25% of our people are aged below 15; 44.05% of women aged 25-29 are unmarried; infant mortality rate stands as high as 38.9/1000.'*
>
> (Gyalpo 2004a, www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=7948&t=4&c=1)

6.1 Introduction

In exploring the spatiality of TGiE, the previous chapter focused on the relationship between territory and sovereignty. However, the significant territorial and judicial limitations of the Tibetan government and community in exile demonstrate that this mode of power cannot fully explain this case. This chapter examines the form and functioning of TGiE from a different theoretical perspective, drawing on a different conception of power. Rather than a Weberian sovereign-territorial model with the state as the centre of power, I want to focus on the extra-territorial and non-state centric form of power found in Foucault's notions of governmentality and biopower. This entails a shift from issues of power over territory, land and property to issues of power over population, welfare and economy – the management of lives and livelihoods.

Going beyond the administrative structures of 'government', governmentality denotes the micro-political practices through which a governing agency conditions people to act in specific ways and through which people govern themselves (Foucault 1991). As such, it encapsulates a fundamentally new orientation to the study of power and authority and how the individual and the state are connected (Dean 1999). At first glance there appear distinct advantages to using these ideas for examining the functioning of TGiE. First, whilst Foucault is careful to emphasise that governmentality is not the displacement of one form of power (sovereignty) with others (disciplinary society and governmentality), nevertheless his 'main target is the Hobbesian juridical model of sovereignty, a system of power with a single centre' (Neal 2004: 375). Given TGiE's tenuous legal standing and lack of legal jurisdiction over territory, this shift away from power being dependent

on sovereignty to the 'notion of government as an activity, or an "art" that is plural and immanent' (Dean 1999: 103) is a framework which appears highly applicable to this case. Secondly, in contrast to theories of government which ask 'who rules?' and 'what is the source of that rule?' the idea of governmentality focuses on 'how' questions. As such, in focusing on the technologies – the practices, instruments and mechanisms – that make different forms of rule possible (Dean 1994: 29, 188) this is an approach which is appropriate for what is an often confusingly defined polity. Moreover, Foucault's concern with the micro-political and micro-administrative practices of power also lends itself to an ethnography of TGiE's governing practices.

This chapter examines the intersection of the case of TGiE with two ongoing debates regarding governmentality: the extent to which governmentality is a state or non-state practice, and the question of what is being governed. With regards to the former, considering governmentality as an 'expansive way of thinking about governing and rule in relation to the exercise of modern power' (Watts 2003: 13) crucially displaces the state as the locus of government and refuses the reduction of political power to the actions of the state (Miller and Rose 1990). This facilitates a focus on 'the diverse and heterogeneous agencies' through which governance works (Dean and Henman 2004: 483), with governmentality as a multidimensional and trans-scalar endeavour which can be undertaken by a range of non-state as well as state actors (Legg 2005; Sidhu and Christie 2007). Looking beyond Foucault's writing, there has been a shift of academic focus towards governance without government (Eckersley 2004) and increasing acknowledgement of the technologies of governmentality that have arisen beyond the state (Ong 1999; Robinson 1999; Rose-Redwood 2006). Yet, we are also accustomed to a certain way of thinking about government which derives from the concept of the state. Consequently, the majority of literature which draws on the idea of governmentality has viewed it as a technique of state power. This includes work by geographers (Philo 1992; Murdoch and Ward 1997; Hannah 2000; Watts 2003; Corbridge *et al* 2005), sociologists (e.g. Burchell *et al* 1991; Barry *et al* 1996; Dean 1999) and anthropologists (e.g. Fuller and Bénéï 2001; Hansen and Stepputat 2001). Situated between and across these approaches to the relationship between governmentality and the state, the case of TGiE raises important questions. Do states do governmentality in a different way to non-states, and if so, how? Does, as Rose-Redwood suggests, 'the broad scope of Foucault's notion of "government"... [enable us] to consider the interplay between state and non-state practices of government'? (2006: 471)

Crucially, not only does governmentality open up the possibility of polities other than states governing, but it also allows for entities other than territory to be what is governed. Whilst governmentality is an inherently *spatial* concept constituted of a range of territorialising strategies, Foucault's writings on governmentality in many ways underplay and marginalise the role of *territory* (Elden 2007). Foucault asks whether the emergence of governmentality means that there is 'a shift of accent and the appearance of new objectives, and hence of new problems and new techniques... from a "territorial state" to a "population state"?' (2004a: 373 cited in Elden 2007: 563). Rather than sovereign power over subjects within a defined territorial state, or the disciplinary regulation of bodies within demarcated spaces, governmentality regards individuals as members of a population: a resource to be used, managed and optimised (Dean 1999). Foucault termed this 'power over life' 'biopower' (1978) and the subsequent production of knowledge about and regulation of the population 'biopolitics'. However, the relative significance of population and territory in Foucault's later work remains a topic of debate. Is this a shift from governance over territory to governance over a population or, as Elden (2007) asks, a shift simply in Foucault's preoccupations? Or, conversely, following Rose-Redwood (2006), is 'geo-power' a fundamental prerequisite for 'biopower'?

Given TGiE's lack of contiguous territory and its subsequent inability to govern territory in a legal sense, governmentality's construction of entities such as a population to be acted upon and thus governed opens up an array of possibilities for this exile administration. As such, this chapter explores what it is that TGiE is governing in exile, and how such governmentality is operationalised in a territory-less polity? In seeking to address these questions, this chapter unpacks TGiE's 'arts of governing' in exile by examining its construction of three objects of governance: population, civil society and the economy. Given its centrality to the concept of governmentality, the primary focus will be on the exile administration's construction, regulation and governance of a population. Examining the range of techniques used by TGiE to bring into visibility the Tibetan population in exile, attention will focus on the simultaneous totalising and individualising strategies of biopolitics, the importance of population given the lack of territory, and the intersection of exile realities with such practices of governmentality. However, whilst Foucault's focus was on population, it is important to recognise that governmentality can be applied more broadly and that there are other important domains of government (Legg 2007a). As such, attention will also focus on the

construction of a 'civil society' and an 'economy' in exile. With regards to the former, TGiE's state-like rhetoric of welfare provision, individualising strategies, archipelago of welfare institutions, and interaction with other welfare providers will be explored. Attending to TGiE's changing relationship with Tibetan NGOs in exile, it will be argued that the exile government is striving to manage its own conduct in relation to a sphere of 'civil society' in exile. Finally, the discursive construction of an economy in exile will be examined in the context of seemingly intractable limitations. The chapter will conclude by analysing TGiE's creation of these separate spheres as an attempt to distinguish itself as a government in command of a 'political' sphere, and will return to issues of sovereignty, territory and legitimacy.

6.2 Knowing and governing the Tibetan population in exile

> *'[P]opulation comes to appear above all else as the ultimate end of government. In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself, but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health'*
>
> (Foucault 1991: 100).

With the shift in the eighteenth-century to what Foucault calls governmentality, institutions such as the state take a different interest in the people over whom they govern. Central to this was 'the identification of the people of the state as a population which was understood as the proper focus of the art of government' (Painter 1995: 38). Concomitant with governmentality being the regulation and optimisation of the population is 'the emergence of population as a datum, as a field of intervention and as an objective of governmental techniques' (Foucault 1991: 102). Given TGiE's lack of territorial jurisdiction and the centrality of the diaspora to its raison d'être, the 'creation' of a population is of heightened importance in this case. This section seeks to explore how the Tibetan population in exile comes to be an object of government and how the relationship between governmentality and this population works in this case of a governing agency lacking jurisdiction over territory. In order to address these questions I want to take as a broad framework Hannah's (2000) three 'moments' in the cycle of social control: observation, normalising judgement and regulation. Through this I will focus on how TGiE seeks to know its population through technologies, imagines and normalises the population through discourses and manages the population by regulating conduct.

6.2.1. Observational moment: knowing the exile population through census and statistics

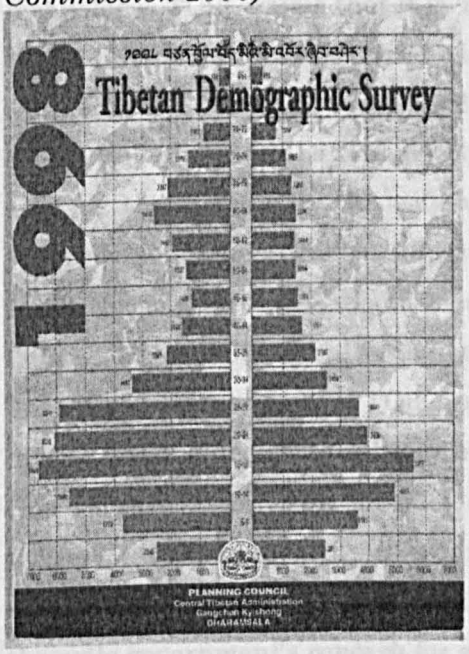
The Tibetan Government prior to 1959 knew relatively little about its population. The boundaries of Tibetan territory were never clearly defined, regional identities subsumed a broader Tibetan national identity, and no census had ever been conducted (Goldstein 1989). The process of taking refuge in exile has, however, rendered this part of the Tibetan population highly visible – as destitute refugees and as ethnically, culturally and religiously distinct from their hosts – and, as such, was in itself an 'observational moment'. Indeed, whilst the elaboration of a notion of the population is conventionally a gradual technical and theoretical process (Dean 1999), in the Tibetan case this process was accelerated by the flight into exile.

For the first few years it was the Indian Government which recorded the number of Tibetans entering India and where they (were) moved to within the state (TPPRC 2006a, 2006b). The organised transfer of Tibetan refugees from initial transit camps to agricultural settlements facilitated the observation of this population, which continues to be monitored by the Indian authorities through registration with local police authorities and the administration of 'Registration Certificates' (see Chapter 7). With the (re)establishment and subsequent bureaucratic development of TGiE, the exiled administration gradually developed mechanisms to know more about its population, to the extent that TGiE has collected more 'information' about the exile population than the Tibetan Government knew about the Tibetan population in pre-1959 Tibet. Until 1998, such knowledge about the exile population was acquired through a range of ad hoc surveys and registration systems. These included: Settlement and Welfare Office records; the documentation of newcomer refugees by TGiE Reception Centres in Kathmandu, Delhi and Dharamsala; the administration of TGiE-issued identity documents; the registration of individuals at Tibetan schools and monasteries; surveys conducted for the TGiE's 'Integrated Development Plans'; and DIIR records regarding Tibetans residing outside South Asia. Whilst significant in developing statistical skills within the community, these surveys and processes of registration were each aimed at either a specific cohort within the exiled population, or administered within a particular sector (health care, education etc). A milestone in how TGiE has come to 'know' its population came with the first census – the 'Tibetan Demographic Survey' (TDS) – of the exile Tibetan community in 1998, and it is to

the processes, techniques and materialities of this census that that I want to turn.[97]

'The census remains one of the principal conduits of biopolitics' (Corbridge *et al* 2005: 27) and, as Hannah argues in his study of governmentality in nineteenth-century America, it is 'an unusually revealing institution through which to trace the mutual influence of the logic of governmentality and the larger cultural context in which it was embedded' (2000: 222). In the Tibetan case, the TDS was conducted under the auspices of TGiE's Planning Commission and was 'carried out systematically and scientifically with due cooperation from the Census Commission of India' (Planning Commission 2004: 7). 2,375 enumerators were recruited from settlement staff, monks and school-teachers to undertake the census in 93 locations in India and Nepal on 12th June 1998, while enumeration of overseas Tibetans was conducted by volunteers working with the Offices of Tibet. Household and individual questionnaires were filled in, with the former covering institutions as well as conventional households, and the data from the 1998 TDS was published in two substantial volumes (Figure 6.a), and has been used extensively by TGiE, the GoI and independent researchers.[98]

Figure 6.a: Front cover of Tibetan Demographic Survey (Planning Commission 2000)



97 A second census was conducted in April 2009 but, at the time of writing, results had not yet been published. The discussion here is therefore based on the 1998 TDS.

98 Household questionnaires addressed issues of tenure, facilities, the distance to the nearest clinic and school, who lives in the household and where they were born while individual questionnaires gathered information on age, sex, religion, languages spoken and literacy, education, marital status, place of birth, reasons for migration, employment and citizenship.

The census is conventionally associated with the state. Generally considered to be a national technique of power, the census, alongside the map, is a key way in which state power is extended and consolidated and the homogenous space of the nation constructed (Anderson 1991; Hannah 2000). Thus, as a non-state, how does TGiE's census relate to these descriptions? What are the key points of convergence and divergence between TDS and a 'conventional' national census? At face value the TDS appears to be more in line with national, state organised, population censuses than most refugee population surveys. Rather than a joint exercise between UNHCR and the host government (Hyndman 2000), the TDS was initiated and organised by the refugee community itself, albeit with external funding and technical expertise. Moreover, never explicitly referred to as a 'refugee census', the TDS's objective was not to assist refugee protection and programmes such as voluntary repatriation, reintegration or resettlement abroad, nor is it used to issue identity documentation or register refugees on an individual basis.

With regards to similarities to a state census, the use of a standardised census format – conducted every ten years with household and individual data stored in aggregate form and analysed and presented statistically – can be read as (yet another) attempt by TGiE to 'play the state game'. In light of this 'standardised technology', TGiE claims that it is 'in a position to provide reliable population data to the United Nations and various international aid organizations when requested' (Planning Council 1994, Section 2.6.4.1). Secondly, in line with state rationales for conducting censuses, the primary objective of the survey is to facilitate planning in and for the community, identifying needs on a settlement-by-settlement basis, charting population trends, allocating resources and deriving a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of development programs (Chief Planning Officer, 20.03.2006). Finally, the census and statistical studies published from it form an important part of TGiE's nascent and state-like archive. Stored in TGiE offices and the dedicated Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, this material record also includes data collected by each of TGiE's departments, testimonies from recent refugees and a range of historical, cultural and religious documents smuggled out of Tibet. More than simply a record of TGiE's activities, the exile government's concern for gathering, using and storing information is, like state archives generally, part of the exile administration's construction and use of power (Ogborn 2003). Thus, as a process of knowledge production which constructs 'a set of bureaucratic imaginaries... a kind of grand fiction with undoubted "reality"

effects' (Thrift 2000: 382), the exile archive can be understood as an attempt by TGiE to consolidate and reify this polity's existence and place in the world.

However, important differences between TDS and conventional national censuses are also revealing. Firstly, with TGiE's limited judicial powers there is no element of coercion in the Tibetan census: not cooperating in the enumeration is not illegal and there are no penalties. Secondly, in what will be a recurring theme in this chapter, an important additional objective of the TDS is as a training exercise in demographic methods and statistical analysis, providing the exiled community with experience and expertise needed to conduct such a project in 'Future Tibet' (Planning Council 1994, Section 2.6.4.1).

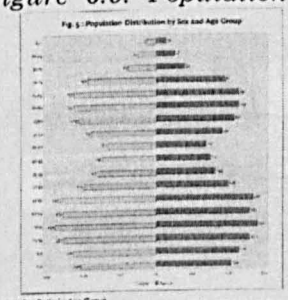
Perhaps the most enlightening disjuncture between the TDS and conventional national censuses is the issue of territory. The census is conventionally intricately linked with both territory and territorialising strategies. With regards the former, whilst the exile Tibetan census is fundamentally not the conventional counting of individuals within a contiguous and bounded space, it is shaped by the spatiality of the diaspora. In theory this is a transnational census in its attempts to enumerate the exile community resident in a number of different states. However, given the challenges resulting from the geographical dispersion and high levels of mobility of the exile community there are significant 'blind spots' in TGiE's 'vision' of the social body. In light of financial and bureaucratic constraints, questionnaires were not used beyond India and Nepal, with only the total numbers of Tibetans living abroad being documented (Planning Council 2000: 6). In addition, there were difficulties encountered 'enumerating the scattered or floating population, those who are living outside their permanent settlements or residing permanently in Indian cities' (*ibid*). As such, the TDS is perhaps most accurately a census of the population in India, and, more specifically, those residing in Tibetan settlements.

This bias towards the bounded spaces of the settlements is also reflected in the Planning Commission's use of territorialising practices. Typically, a census is preceded by land surveys and the census results are used for demographic mapping. As such, Hannah describes the census as 'an important geographical moment in the establishment of territorial mastery' (2000: 9. See also Edney 1997; Scott 1998). At the micro-level of the settlements there are distinct similarities between the TDS and such territorialising practices. For example, following the Indian Census model, land surveying in the form of house-listing within Tibetan

settlements in India and Nepal was conducted prior to the 1998 census (Planning Council 2000: 5-6). Indeed, land surveying has been a regular practice within the settlements, both in terms of the initial demarcation and allocation of plots (Norgay, Dekyiling 17.04.2007), and an ongoing regulatory programme of checks for plot encroachment.[99] The enumeration process of entering Tibetan homes and its prerequisite land-surveys can thus be read as fundamentally territorial exercises, with such practices also correlating with the assertion made in the previous chapter that the bounded spaces of the exile settlements are key to the governmental functions of TGiE.

Stepping back from the details of the TDS, I want to return to literature that draws on Foucault's ideas of governmentality and biopower to consider the wider implications of the census and its role within the exiled Tibetan community. As a number of scholars have persuasively argued through a diverse range of case studies (Anderson 1991; Murdoch and Ward 1997; Scott 1998), the census and the statistics generated from it are techniques which do far more than merely provide information about a population. For a start, the presentation of demographic data in the form of tables, graphs and diagrams are key mechanisms through which the population is made legible and rendered as an entity to be organised, controlled, manipulated, studied and known (Barnes and Hannah 2001: 379), and thus made 'amenable to intervention and regulation' (Miller and Rose 1990: 5; Figure 6.b).

Figure 6.b: Population Distribution statistics (Planning Commission 2004: 41)



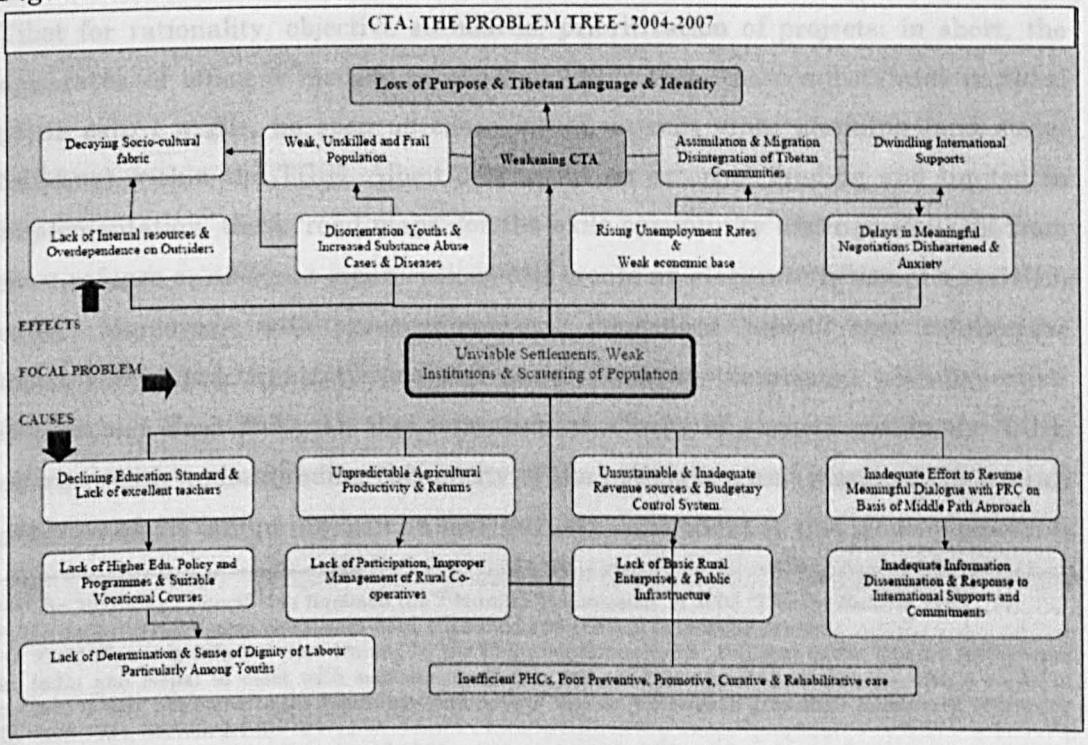
Age group	Male	Female	Males per 100 Females
0-4	130	113	116
5-9	118	117	101
10-14	101	100	101
15-19	108	104	104
20-24	142	105	135
25-29	108	103	104
30-34	120	103	116
35-39	107	104	103
40-44	109	113	96
45-49	89	113	79
50-54	79	106	77
55-59	104	89	117
60-64	125	125	100
65-69	107	90	118
70-74	109	75	145
75-79	49	34	144
80 +	48	34	141
Total	2482	1955	Sex Ratio 126

99 In terms of mapping, the census data itself is not mapped and the maps which TGiE does produce – of its settlements and welfare facilities in South Asia (see Chapter 5) – are descriptive tools rather than a 'geographical moment in the establishment of territorial mastery' (Hannah 2000: 9).The only map included in the census publication is one of Tibetan enumeration centres in South Asia which shows the site of Tibetan settlements and scattered communities in India and Nepal (Planning Commission 2000: viii. Similar to Figure 5.d).

The census therefore constitutes a key part of the governing process: a mechanism of regulation central to the possibility of governmental control and stable rule (Watts 2003). In the case of TGiE, the administration claims that through the TDS it 'knows' 'the quality and constitution of the Community's human resource base' (Planning Commission 2004: 18), and establishes the boundaries of this entity by employing important exclusions in delimiting the *Tibetan* population (Planning Council 2000).

With the Tibetan population in exile having thus come into view through the TDS as a distinct and singular entity, the TGiE has developed a range of strategies for examining, problematising and rationalising its internal dynamics. Encapsulated in the 'problem tree' produced for the third Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (Figure 6.c), a number of 'critical demographic and socio-economic issues' (Planning Commission 2004: 18) are perceived to compromise the ongoing success of this exile population. Indeed, it is the discourses underpinning the economic, social, demographic and institutional issues raised in this diagram, and practices employed to seek to rectify and manage them which will form an important backdrop to the remaining sections of this chapter.

Figure 6.c: Problem tree produced for IDP III (TGiE 2004: 9)



Of course the 'process of supposedly impartial assessment whereby knowledge gained from observation of the body politic is translated into socioeconomic policy remains highly imperfect' (Hannah 2000:14), but the laying out – and one might say totalising – of these policy issues has the effect of generating a demand for long-term planning and intervention. As such, framed as key to improving the lives of the exiled population, an infrastructure of centralised planning in the exile community was institutionalised through the establishment of the Planning Council in 1988.[100] Serving as a consultant to the *Kashag* in matters relating to socio-economic development, the Planning Commission was set the task of identifying and meeting the needs of the community through generating a series of plans 'for using the Tibetan Refugee Community's human, material and financial resources for the development of the Community more efficiently' (Planning Council 1994, Section 9.6.1). Modelled on the Indian Planning Commission's Five-Year Plans – a formal framework of state planning instituted after India gained independence (Corbridge 2008) – these have been formulated as IDPs.[101] Produced in consultation with the various departments of TGiE and with a cross-section of the community in the exile settlements,[102] these detailed and lengthy documents set out the development priorities for the community and outline individual projects and their budgets for prospective funders (Chief Planning Officer, 20.03.2006).[103] In thus both offering a totalising overview of the exile community's attributes, needs and priorities, and meeting 'the demand of Western friends of Tibet for rationality, objective standards, prioritization of projects: in short, the apparatus of efficient modernity' (Lafitte 1999: 158), these substantial national plans can, I argue, be seen as examples of nascent state planning (and state-building) within the TGiE. Albeit contingent on external funding and limited in implementation, these 'road maps' for the exile community distinguish TGiE from most refugee or diaspora organisations and create an elaborate fiction of a state-in-exile. Moreover, with governmentality dependent upon 'the intellectual technologies, practical activities and social authority associated with expertise' (Miller and Rose 1990: 1), this formation of a body of experts within the TGiE charged with understanding this entity of the population and planning the overall progress of the community can be seen as a key component in this mode of power.

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[100] The 'Planning Council' was renamed the 'Planning Commission' in 2003 (*Tibetan Bulletin* 2003, 7(4): 12).
[101] To date three five-year plans have been published and the fourth is being drafted.
[102] 'Field Planning Officers' were trained by the Planning Commission and sent to the Tibetan settlements in India and Nepal to meet with settlement officials and conduct planning workshops with a range of settlers which, according to the Planning Commission was an 'exercise in grassroots democracy' (Planning Council 1994, Section 2.1.3).
[103] The third IDP (2003-2007) consisted of 12 principal areas and 534 projects and programmes with a total cost of 104,40,00000 Rupees (23.2 million US$) (TGiE 2004).

6.2.2. Normalising judgement: creating the exile population through discourse

In shifting from the techniques and micropolitics of power to the discursive character of governmentality (Miller and Rose 1990), I want to examine some of the discourses underpinning the issues summarised in the 'problem tree' (Figure 6.c) and, therefore, in the development planning process. Following Hannah's framework of the cycle of social control this entails a move from 'observational moments' to 'normalising judgement', attending to how the exile population is imagined, created and understood by TGiE through discursive and totalising practices. What is striking is that whilst TGiE seeks to 'know' its exile population using the techniques conventionally employed by states – census-taking and statistical analysis – its discursive construction of the population is specifically attuned to the exile situation. In light of the threatened 'loss of purpose and Tibetan language and identity' (TGiE 2004), this is a population perceived as having a series of interlinked and distinct purposes: as a 'resource' which needs to be preserved; as a population in waiting and in training ready to return to govern a future Tibet; and as a cultural repository, preserving a unified and essentialised Tibetan national identity outside the home territory.

At the core of TGiE's construction of its population is the idea of population as a resource: a resource under threat in Tibet and which therefore needs to be preserved in exile. TGiE's concerns with demographic changes in the Tibetan population in Tibet are a recurrent and often highly politicised part of government publications and speeches by political leaders (Shiromany 1998) and, unsurprisingly, are a major point of contention with the Chinese authorities. The TGiE alleges that 1.2 million Tibetans died between 1959 and 1986 through detention, famine, prosecution and poverty as a direct result of Chinese occupation (Planning Council 2000: 1). This is a figure which, despite its reliability being disputed, 'has become enshrined as an incontrovertible truth in exile discourse' (Childs and Barkin 2006: 40). In addition, TGiE and Tibetan NGOs claim that the Chinese authorities are undertaking 'demographic aggression' through policies of forced abortions and sterilisations in Tibetan areas and deliberate population transfer of Han Chinese into Tibet, with the result that Tibetans are becoming a minority in their own land (AFP, 3 November 2007).[104] This portrayal of an ethnic

[104] Whilst the 2000 Chinese census reported a 26% increase in the Tibetan population in China since 1990, Chinese statistics also record a 3.5% fall in the proportion of Tibetans to non-Tibetans in the 'Tibetan Autonomous Region between 1990 and 2000 (MacPherson *et al* 2008).

group threatened with extinction is discursively linked by the exiled administration to the vitality of the exiled population, with the construction of the latter as a population whose numbers need to be preserved (Planning Commission 2004: 19). In light of such anxieties, and following the publication of the TDS results, TGiE has become 'obsessed with statistics concerning birth rates, morbidity and endemics' (Legg 2005: 1341). A key concern is the low and declining fertility rate (from 4.9 births per women in 1987-9 to 1.7 in 1999-2001) and the subsequent 'threat to the sustenance of the Tibetan community in India... and erosion of [our] very purpose' (Planning Commission 2004: 30).

This discourse of the Tibetan population (or rather, populations) as a resource has important resonances with state-like strategies of biopower. Not only has TGiE established as one of its central concerns the care, health and reproduction of the exile population, but it is also seeking to optimise the productivity of this population in order to meet the exile government's broader political project. Central to this idea is the discursive construction of this population as 'in waiting', ready to return to the homeland in the future. Premised on an idealised and arguably unrealistic notion that the exile community will move 'back home' if or when the political conditions are favourable (see Chapter 5), this discourse is articulated in terms of the need for a healthy and expanding exile population trained in the skills of governance, democracy and development planning in order to implement these ideas in governing a 'Future Tibet'.

However, whilst important, discourses around biopolitics only tell half the story. In addition to the vitality of the Tibetan population being under threat from Chinese population policies, Tibetan identity and culture are also perceived as endangered (Samdup 1993). As a result, the exile population is perceived by TGiE as a cultural and national repository, preserving Tibetan identity and way of life outside the home territory. Indeed, this is articulated as one of the main reasons for coming into and remaining in exile:

> 'The purpose of the Tibetans in exile is two-fold, viz., to seek justice for our homeland and to preserve our identity and language by practicing our culture and traditions. The first purpose is dependent on many factors including international situation, political changes within China etc that are beyond our control.... However, the second purpose is not dependent on external factors and can be fulfilled by every Tibetan in exile' (*Tibetan Bulletin*, 7(3), 2003: 16).

In order to construct the diasporic population as a cultural repository, TGiE needed to foster a very particular kind of population in exile: a cohesive, united and homogenous community which shares a single national identity.[105] In doing so, the exile government has sought to subsume fractious regional and sectarian identities which dominated pre-1950s Tibet under a homogenous and pan-Buddhist national Tibetan identity which had previously not existed beyond the Lhasa elite (Nowak 1984).[106] It is a strategy which has been largely successful for, whilst regional identities and divisions remain in the community (especially with regards to the exile elections, see Chapter 8), most interviewees spoke of 'Tibetanness' being their most important identity marker, reflecting Yeh's observation that regional identities are 'largely papered over in the transnational nation-building' (2007: 650). This essentialising of national identity and politicising of Tibetan ethnicity thus forms a key part of TGiE's nation-building project in exile (Norbu 1992). In addition, it is imperative to remember that this construction of a nationalised population generates a new national body formed primarily in exile. As such, an increasingly significant division arises between the exile population and Tibetans in Tibet. The decades-long project of cultural preservation in exile has produced, confusingly, both a static and conservative version of Tibetan culture, and one increasingly influenced by Indian and Western cultures (Harris 1997; Yeh and Lama 2006). Meanwhile, Tibetan culture and identity within the homeland has been suppressed and increasingly sinicized and, where exile and homeland cultures come together, there are often tensions over issues of identity and authenticity (Yeh 2007).

Relating such discursive constructions of Tibetan identity to ideas of governmentality, the importance placed on the discourse of cultural preservation within the Tibetan government and community in exile offers an important interjection. For, whilst biopolitics is important to the construction and management of the Tibetan 'population' (as outlined above), it is matched if not superseded by the role of *cultural* politics. The role of culture is heightened in this case both because of the perceived threat to its existence and continuance in the homeland and, given the practical and legal limitations faced by TGiE, it is

[105] Indeed, whilst nationalist movements in general claim a distinct identity and independent history and strive to present an image of unity, this project is prioritised in the Tibetan case given the perceived threats to the Tibetan population and Tibetan identity in Tibet (Bentz 2006).

[106] Discussed in more detail in the following chapter, Tibetan nationalism is broadly understood as constructed through the occupation of Tibet and flight into exile (Shakya 1999: 95) with TGiE central to the fostering of a national identity and political consciousness.

through the cultural realm and construction of nationalism that TGiE primarily attempts to assert its authority. As a young teacher at TCV Sonamling explained:

> 'The power and authority of our government, it comes from the sentiments, the patriotic and heartfelt sentiments of the people – what is in their hearts not the practicalities of our government because its finances aren't big at all and it cannot help people much financially but... it's because of people's nationalism that it exists and is so important' (Riga, 21.05.2007).

Such privileging of the role of culture and nationalism thus highlights both the danger of reducing politics to biopolitics and the need to foreground and critically engage with cultural politics and cultural contexts in relation to governmentality. Indeed, if we are to chart the transformation of a 'population' into a social body and national 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991) through discursive practices, then the role of culture is central. For, while governmentality requires and constructs 'the social' as an object of governmental concern, this is a social body imagined through specific cultural frames, and with a particular cultural purpose.

6.2.3. Regulation: managing the population through regulating individual conduct

In order to examine *how* TGiE strives to achieve the 'ideal' exile population outlined above I want to turn to the final moment in the cycle of social control of this Tibetan population in exile, that of the regulation of the body politic. Indeed, it is only once the social body has been identified and reified as a resource and quasi object that its care can be managed and its behaviour regulated (Barnes and Hannah 2001); a role conventionally viewed as that of the state. In contrast to the totalising strategies of state-planning and policy-making, I want to focus here on the individualising mode of governmentality and, keeping the intertwining of biopolitics and cultural politics in the foreground, explore TGiE's strategies for regulating the health, identity and mobility of its 'citizens' in exile.

Turning first to discourses regarding the Tibetan population as a scarce resource, the exile government attempts to employ regulatory mechanisms of biopolitics through the management of the health and reproductive behaviour of its exile population. The TGiE's Department of Health, established in 1981 as an apex body to 'plan a comprehensive health care system for the Tibetan Refugee Community' (Planning Council 1994, Section 6), currently administers an extensive network of health care facilities. These include seven hospitals, five Primary Health Centres, a clinic in each of the 47 settlements in India and Nepal and a school for children with special needs (Department of Health 2005). Alongside these medical

institutions are a range of public health policies and initiatives, with programmes for disease control (with a focus on tuberculosis), improving sanitation and access to drinking water in the settlements, and expanding health education programmes.

In terms of promoting the reproduction of the population, 'mother and child health' and 'reproductive health' programmes have been initiated by TGiE and rolled out across the settlements (Secretary, Department of Health 21.03.2006). In addition, stable family units or, as they are termed in the TDS 'normal household situations' (Planning Council 2000: 12) are promoted within the community through the allocation of settlement houses and TGiE's discouragement of the annual migratory trade in sweaters (see below). More broadly, pronatalism is strongly promoted by TGiE as an essential step towards stemming the perceived threat to the existence of Tibetans as a distinct ethnic group. As such, members of the exile community are 'encouraged to further a nationalistic agenda, promulgated and disseminated by their leaders, by reproducing exclusively with Tibetans at a sufficient rate to ensure population growth' (Childs and Barkin 2006: 49). TGiE also attempts to regulate sexual and reproductive behaviour through managing the interaction of its population in exile with their host community, actively promoting ethnic endogamy and discouraging assimilation and citizenship in host nations (McGukin 1997). As outlined in the previous chapter, the policy of non-assimilation was one supported by India and resulted in the establishment of separate and exclusive Tibetan settlements. In addition to this spatial separation, there is widespread disapproval from both the exile leadership and the general public of marriages outside the Tibetan community.

This promotion of endogamy is therefore central to TGiE's attempts to foster a homogenous Tibetan community in exile sheltered from external influences, and hence aptly illustrates the exile government's pursuit of cultural politics through regulatory mechanisms of biopolitics. For, just as the Tibetan population is discursively constructed by TGiE as both a biopower resource *and* cultural repository, so the regulatory strategies the exile administration employs to manage the population emphasises the cultural and national identity of the population alongside its health and fecundity. With regards to TGiE's attempts to manage identity construction within the exile community, a number of regulatory mechanisms are employed with varying degrees of effectiveness. Perhaps the most obvious is the TGiE's establishment of universal Tibetan citizenship. Whilst discussed in detail in the following chapter, it is important to note here that TGiE's

definition of a 'bona fide Tibetan' through the norms and exclusions of Tibetan citizenship individualises exile Tibetans in specific ways (Corrigan and Sayer 1985). It is a state-like process of simplification whereby Tibetans are produced as citizens and thereby made legible to the governing authority (Scott 1998). Secondly, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Tibetan settlements and cultural and religious institutions are central to the project of nation-building, both in terms of constituting 'national spaces' in exile, and as spaces of governance where the population can be kept together, observed and managed.

In addition, a standardised version of Tibetan nationalism has been fostered in exile through a range of 'national' traditions and rituals which construct a powerful imagined sense of solidarity and belonging. These are patriotic yet banal acts and performances (Billig 1995) which include singing the national anthem, flying the national flag, staging debates on the legitimacy of Tibet's claim to independence and participation in national 'holidays' such as the anniversary of the national uprising in Lhasa on 10th March 1959 and the Dalai Lama's birthday on 6th July (Nowak 1978). Indeed, with its implied national solidarity in the terms '*We* count 122,078 in exile... 74.4% of *our* people can read', the quotation from an article posted on phayul.com by Gyalpo at the start of this chapter is a prime example of banal nationalism at work. These performances of Tibetan nationhood therefore perpetuate the myth of national unity, instilling a collective sensibility and a uniform definition of Tibetan identity (Kolås 1996: 57). Moreover, such 'traditions' and practices have not only been reinterpreted in exile, but are often 'invented' and, crucially, 'through their position of authority, the Dalai Lama and the government-in-exile become primary authors of these reworkings' (Houston and Wright 2003: 222): a role which reinforces the administration's authority and legitimacy.

Another key arena in which Tibetan identity is standardised and regulated is that of education. It is widely accepted that school curricula construct a citizen's moral order, worldview and sense of national identity (Radcliffe 2001). In the Tibetan case, education has been accorded the highest priority since the early years of exile and the Department of Education currently administers 85 schools in India, Nepal and Bhutan, serving around 70% (27,220) of Tibetan children in exile (Planning Council 1994, Section 5.1.1). [107] In these schools 'Tibetan textbooks and teachers...

[107] Tibetan schools in exile can be categorised into three types depending on the source of funding and administrative structure. Firstly, TGiE's Department of Education directly runs and funds 34 'Sambhota'

transmit a curriculum of Tibetaness' (Kolås 1996: 57) alongside the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education-approved syllabus. In documenting the role of this exilic education system in promoting an essentialised notion of Tibetan nationalism Nowak notes that this was a 'systematic attempt to shape a more cohesive group identity in exile' (1978: 71) especially amongst second generation Tibetans in India. Such is the pivotal role of education in the eyes of TGiE that failings in the education system – such as 'declining education standards' particularly around issues of language (Figure 6.c) – are perceived to jeopardise the broader project of preserving Tibetan culture and identity (Additional Secretary, Department of Education, 17.03.2006). In light of such concerns, the TGiE has recently launched a 'Basic Education Policy' which (re)emphasises traditional Tibetan education taught in Tibetan language and promotes the 'study of the value, teachings, practices and histories of the principles of nonviolence and democracy' (Department of Education 2005: 69). As such, this policy aims to produce a very specific and idealised 'type' of Tibetan – both traditional and modern, non-violent and truthful – through what are in effect a series of disciplinary institutions (schools) and technologies (curriculum). Through this normalising of an ideal 'Tibetan', becoming and being a Tibetan 'citizen' can be seen as highly performative (see Taylor 1997).[108]

The final set of regulatory mechanisms that I want to highlight are those related to distinct cohorts within the exile population who, in failing or refusing to remain within the established Tibetan spaces in India, are perceived as threatening the population ideal of a homogenous, united and nationalised community. In order to regulate the mobility and residency behaviour of these groups, such individuals first need to be identified through categorisation techniques employed in the TDS and a range of other socio-economic surveys (Hacking 1991; Scott 1998). Seen through the lens of governmentality, such formalised and codified systems of categorisation are, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue, central to the articulation of state power and authority.

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schools. Secondly, 30 'Central Schools for Tibetans' are financed by the Central Tibetan Schools Administration, an autonomous body of the GoI, and administered by the TGiE. Finally, 21 schools are funded and administered by private charitable organisations, notably the Tibetan Children's Village and Tibetan Homes Foundation.

[108] However, the Basic Education Policy has proved controversial, especially regarding the issue of language. Whilst those supporting the transition to Tibetan medium stress the importance of the language to Tibetan identity, a number of teachers, students and parents are not convinced, arguing that Tibetan medium education will disadvantage Tibetan students in the Indian job market, or looking for careers in the West (interviews with parents in Dekyiling and Bylakuppe, and university students in Delhi and Dharamsala).

The first cohort is the thousands of refugees who, as a result of to resource constraints, remain 'unsettled' in India and Nepal. Consistently viewed as 'other' to the population residing in the Tibetan settlements, these individuals 'do not belong to a viable Tibetan community in which they can preserve their language and culture and give their children a Tibetan education' (Planning Council 1994, Section 3B.1.1). Prompting similar concerns are the thousands of Tibetans who, due to a lack of employment opportunities in the settlements, leave in the winter months to sell sweaters in cities across India.[109] Although this is 'one of the oldest trades that Tibetans got into since their arrival in India and majority of our people are still dependent on it' (*Paljor Bulletin* June 2005: 16), the social effects of this annual migration, especially on the institution of the family, are viewed as highly problematic by TGiE. As the Additional Secretary at the Department of Home and then Finance and DIIR *Kalon* explained:

> 'This seasonal work, it affects the sustainability of settlement. Able-bodied adults are away and... how to say... family atmosphere is not there. This doesn't serve our main aim of settlements, of keeping the community together' (18.03.2006),
>
> 'there are many problems with this sweater selling – so there is a health hazard as they don't have proper shops and just sell from the road side so they have problems with dust and cold.... Also there are significant problems for the community, especially with bringing up children as it's not so decent, especially interacting with locals at that level of society. It hampers our society and splits our families, and the families you see are the centre of our tradition and culture preservation' (10.04.2006).

These concerns about individuals leaving the homogenous Tibetan communities of the settlements are also articulated with regards to a third cohort. Frequently mentioned in TGiE policy documents and a recurrent topic of conversation in my interviews, this is the 'youth', or more specifically the 'unemployed youth'. Whilst older generations in general live sheltered lives in the Tibetan settlements, young Tibetans educated in exile are far more exposed to Indian and Western society (Ström 1995), prompting concerns regarding loss of culture, anti-social behaviour and increasing numbers emigrating to the West (TWA 2005: 56).

Having identified these cohorts and constructed them as problematic, TGiE has sought to regulate their behaviour with the goal of integrating them into the 'mainstream' of the exile community. Central to this has been an attempt to control

[109] The 1998 TDS reported that 63.71% of the total exile population are engaged in informal migratory trading during the winter months (Planning Council 2000: 18).

the residency and mobility of these 'wayward' cohorts. Whilst, as noted above, the extent to which space is a tool of material social control is limited in this case, a number of territorialising mechanisms are nevertheless employed to attempt to manage the mobility of populations through the system of settlements. These include the 'listing' of Tibetan families and individuals moving to the settlements;[110] the assigning of vacant houses within the settlements to 'unsettled' Tibetans; and encouraging sweater sellers and young Tibetans residing in Indian cities to 'resettle' in the settlements. With regards to the latter, this has been framed by TGiE as a process and project of 'rehabilitation' whereby the provision of housing and basic social amenities has an explicit aim of 'mainstreaming and integrating the scattered populations' (Secretary, Department of Home, 06.11.2007). These policies carry with them distinct connotations of social regulation. Government officials frequently spoke of establishing a desired order and stability within the community, of attempting to 'settle' the 'troublesome' scattered populations and the young generation, and persuade them away from the social dangers they are exposed to outside the community. The settlements can therefore be seen as 'governable spaces' in exile. Indeed, in seeming to support the argument made in the previous chapter that governmental power is ultimately contingent upon, and is made possible through, spatial relations and territory (see Allen 2003a), it is interesting to ponder whether the territories in exile enable TGiE to operate as a 'government.' Or, conversely, if the Tibetan diaspora in India was more conventionally dispersed, would the governmental functions of TGiE be diminished?

These regulatory policies have faced significant challenges and limitations. Not only is TGiE's governing authority limited by its operation within the sovereign space of India, but the territorialising strategies of resettlement often face significant resistance from the cohorts at which they are aimed. Although its moral authority – and the governmental legitimacy which stems from this – are highly significant and go some way to explaining the compliance of Tibetans with TGiE settlement policies in the past, ultimately TGiE lacks the legal authority and coercive (state) powers to determine the movement of its exiled citizens. The TGiE cannot force Tibetans to move to or remain in the settlements, or indeed remain in India/Nepal. Indeed, in a number of cases the TGiE's policies of settling scattered

[110] This includes the transfer of families from road construction camps to the settlements in Karnataka in the 1960s, and the listing of impoverished widows and newcomers to join handicraft settlements (General Manager, Rajpur handicrafts centre, 24.04.2007).

Tibetans have not been received in the way that they were intended. Several interviewees in Dekyiling spoke of how their families who had been living in scattered communities were granted a house in the settlement on a rent free basis but continued to trade in the hill stations in Uttarakhand, renting out their settlement house or using it for storage. Such use (or abuse) of the system therefore indicates both some of the limitations of TGiE's governance, and perhaps an increasingly conventional state-citizen distrust.

However, such limitations appear almost insignificant compared to the most noticeable and problematic division within the exile population: that between newcomer refugees and those brought up in exile. Based on increasingly intractable cultural differences between these cohorts, Yeh notes how;

> 'the fact that Tibetan identity in exile has been constituted in opposition to China contributes to both the scorn and suspicion of the 'Chinese' appearance and behavior of new arrivals who, because they are different, are seen as less than authentically Tibetan... as a result, many new arrivals report that they feel like outsiders among Tibetan exiles in India' (2007: 653-654).

Such marginalisation of, and even discrimination against, refugees newly arrived from Tibet was readily apparent from my interviews in Dharamsala. I was often left with an impression of two separate communities within the town, a division which one Tibetan journalist described as 'a scourge in our community, a hindrance to our unity and so to our freedom struggle' (Nyidon, 02.05.2007). Surprisingly, this potentially destructive schism within the exile population is one which TGiE appears not to be attempting to regulate or even intervene in. Several interviewees asserted that TGiE has done little to integrate the newcomers into the existing community, with recent refugees rarely being elected to the exile parliament or being appointed to government jobs (which require Indian-recognised qualifications), and one recent exile claiming that TGiE has become a government for Tibetans born in exile, not for those from Tibet like himself (Khedup, 27.03.2007).

6.2.4. Summary

Despite notable limitations and challenges, TGiE has been broadly successful in constructing the Tibetan population in exile as an entity over which it has responsibility and thus as an object of government. Crucially, this is a process which both constructs and goes some way to legitimising TGiE as a governing authority. For, without territory to call their own, it is the population which has

followed the Dalai Lama into exile over the past 50 years which has validated the exile administration's existence and continued functioning. As such, it is hardly surprising that the construction of this population has taken on a heightened importance in this case. However, this section has also explored how, although this is not a population defined by a contiguous territory in which it resides, TGiE does nevertheless employ territorialising strategies. These include both in its attempts to 'know' the population through land-surveying in the settlements, and attempts to manage the mobility and residency of 'wayward' cohorts. As such, the situation of exile has significantly shaped the construction of this population. For, whilst TGiE has been strategic in employing a range of state-like techniques of governmentality in order to appear to speak and act like a state for domestic and external audiences, the discourses through which the population is imagined and idealised are shaped by threats to the Tibetan population and culture in the homeland. Therefore, though revealing in terms of how cultural politics are pursued through the regulatory practices of biopolitics, TGiE's construction of the Tibetan population fails to tell us much about the nature of the relationship between individual Tibetans and their exile government developed through the strategies of governmentality. In light of this, and noting that domains of government beyond the population have been somewhat neglected in work drawing on Foucault's notion of governmentality, I now want look beyond population and biopower to examine the ideologies, institutions and practices of welfare and the construction of a 'civil society' in exile.

6.3 Welfare provision and the delineation of 'civil society' in exile

Seen through the lens of governmentality, 'the "welfare state"... is a way of viewing institutions, practices and personnel, or organising them in relation to a specific ideal of government' (Dean 1999: 32). In terms of providing for the needs of a population, welfare is therefore a key technology through which life is managed and governed. However, in acknowledging that 'regulation' is perhaps not the best word for actions undertaken to enhance social welfare, Hannah (2000) points to the fact that welfare also encompasses important political ideas and ideologies – of rights and responsibilities and a political contract between the citizen and the state – which go beyond the regulatory mechanisms of biopolitics. Keeping this mind, it is the relationship between welfare and the state which is of primary concern here, a relationship of which there are conflicting accounts. On the one hand, welfare is seen as a basic state function, with the state having a moral obligation to look after

its people (Taylor 1994). In contrast to this 'welfare state' model, and in light of increasing devolvement of welfare provision to non-state actors in many Western states, is the development of the idea of a 'welfare society' (Gould 1993). No longer an essential component of statehood, welfare in these cases is provided by a combination of voluntary organisations, private corporations and state agencies. Not only are elements of a welfare state and welfare society apparent in the case of the exile Tibetan community, but I will argue it is both through its own provision of welfare and through negotiating relationships with non-'state' welfare providers that TGiE attempts to construct itself as a government. Focusing on the institutional geographies of welfare, the state-citizen relations established and TGiE's relationship with other welfare providers therefore opens up a number of important questions. What does TGiE see as its remit and responsibility with regards to the exile community and to what extent are these framed as state-like obligations? How is the provision of welfare constrained by TGiE's territorial limitations? And how does TGiE's differentiation of its responsibilities from other welfare providers construct the idea of a civil society in exile and reaffirm the government status of this administration?

6.3.1 Constructing a welfare 'state' in exile?

As McGukin (1997: 68) and Klieger (1992: 102) observe, 'Tibetans have established an increasingly democratic welfare state in exile that provides employment, education and medical care for many of the refugees', resulting in Tibetans in India today benefiting 'from an almost cradle to grave welfare system'. At the core of the welfare provision is the Department of Home which, established in 1960, has the responsibility to 'look after the socio-economic welfare of the Tibetan refugees in exile... so as to achieve the long term goal of self-sufficiency' (www.tibet.net).[111] Working closely with the GoI, the Department of Home receives and distributes donations from foreign aid agencies for its projects which include old people's homes, income generation schemes, handicraft centres, co-operative societies, agriculture development programmes, infrastructure projects and stipends for impoverished families. These projects are implemented and administered at a local level by Settlement Offices in the settlements and Welfare Offices in the scattered communities.

[111] In 1981, considering the expanding works of the Department, and to give legal standing to its activities, the Central Tibetan Relief Committee (CTRC) was formed as its relief and development wing and registered as a non-profit development organisation. For practical purposes the Department of Home and CTRC can be considered one and the same institution.

In its attempts to thus universalise and standardise the provision of welfare for its 'citizens' in India and Nepal, TGiE's discourses, institutions, practices and materialities of welfare are a key arena in which to observe the state-like interaction between TGiE and their exiled community. For, following work on anthropologies of the state (Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Das and Poole 2004), it is through mundane and everyday exchanges regarding health care, entitlements, education provision and sanitation facilities that individuals – and in particular poorer individuals – see the 'state' most directly. Indeed, as a young female MP put it:

> 'Most families have some connection to the government – especially using the schools or health facilities. I think the government does reach all Tibetan people in some way, and the people... they see us as their government' (Tsomo, 13.04.2007).

This expansion of welfare facilities across the settlements can be regarded not only as a strategy for integrating exile Tibetan society but also as an attempt by TGiE to extend its responsibility for the welfare of its citizens as comprehensively as possible. This idea of welfare provision as a duty and responsibility they have to 'their people' and welfare applied universally to citizens as a 'right' was articulated both in TGiE publications and interviews with Tibetan officials at a range of levels. For example, according to the Secretary of the department of Home, his Department is 'mandated to look after the socio-economic welfare and development of the Tibetan community in exile' (06.11.2007).[112] Such sentiments were echoed on a local level with, for example, the Settlement Officer at Dekyiling explaining that;

> 'our settlement people must be settled down... all facilities they must be provided and our people must face no problems living here. This is our important duty, and now I can say we have achieved this in Dekyiling' (18.04.2007).

Such benevolent rhetoric of responsibility, duty and an ethic of care, along with the state-like connotations of the repeated use of 'welfare' and 'entitlements' rather than terms such as 'charity' or 'aid' (Smith 1995: 191) indicates that, from the TGiE perspective at least, this is a state-citizen rather than NGO-recipient relationship. Looking at the story from below in terms of how Tibetans in India perceive and

[112] Interestingly, there is also an increasing trend of TGiE supporting, both financially and administratively, welfare and religious projects in and for Indian Himalayan tribal populations. This includes educational and health care projects in Ladakh and Spiti, and the admission of Himalayan tribal students in exile Tibetan schools and monasteries. Paradoxically, whilst Indian citizens and therefore having a more secure legal status than Tibetans, these tribal populations – who are Tibetan Buddhists and have a shared ancestry – are today perceived as 'poor cousins' of Tibetans and are increasingly dependent on the Tibetan administration and exiled monasteries for welfare and cultural revival (Cherring, 04.04.2007; Phunksok 16.05.2007).

make use of TGiE's welfare provision, many interviewees in the settlements, whilst not expressing it in the language of 'rights' per se, did generally *expect* their government to provide basic welfare services. Indeed, one newcomer now based in Lugsum-Samdupling described how 'parents [in Tibet] put all their faith in the Dalai Lama to look after their children in India – they close their eyes, they also close their hearts and send their children to India' (Wangyal, 20.11.2007). Many respondents were impressed by what the exile government had achieved, comparing the better standards of life in India to that of many in Tibet, and appreciating that their access to and quality of education and health care was in many cases superior to their Indian counterparts.

In addition to such totalising strategies of attempting to provide standardised welfare provision, the TGiE also engages in a process of individualisation through identifying, problematising and then (differentially) regulating cohorts within the exile community. Seen through the lens of biopolitics, this is 'the division of populations into sub-groups that contribute to or retard the general welfare and life of the population' (Dean 1999: 100). Turning to TGiE's construction and regulation of one of these cohorts – the poor, – in recent years the exile government has invested considerable effort in the 'production of persons who can be labelled as poor' (Corbridge *et al* 2005: 47) and subsequently developed policies and material relations with them through the institutions and practices of welfare. At the 'national' level TGiE established a 'poverty line' of 30 Rupees per person per day for the community in India to assess poverty levels within the community,[113] and formed an inter-departmental 'Central Poverty Alleviation Committee' to;

> 'identify poor persons, so as to formulate suitable strategies for intervention and so achieve upliftment [*sic*] of these families from the poverty line' (Secretary, Department of Home, 06.11.2006).

At a 'local' level Settlement Officers instruct the *Gyabons* to conduct regular door-to-door surveys in their camps to 'see the local conditions and report problem cases which can then investigate [*sic*] and get timely and effective welfare support for that person' (Welfare Officer, Dharamsala, 04.04.2007). Once thus identified, TGiE, through a hierarchy of Dharamsala departments, CROs and Settlement/Welfare Offices, implements a series of welfare assistance programmes including monthly

[113] This poverty line, established by the TPiE in 2002, is noticeably higher than India's official measurement of 10 Rupees per day per person (Planning Commission 2004: 85). Of the 14 settlements surveyed by the Planning Commission in 2004, 54% of the population were below the TGiE poverty level of 30Rs/ day/ head and 11% below Indian poverty level of 10Rs/ day/ head (*ibid*).

stipends for the elderly, school scholarships, grants to cover medical expenses, the arrangement of foreign sponsorship, business grants and vocational training. This is therefore a process of identification, problematisation and regulation through which poverty is constructed as a concern that is both concentrated upon certain social groups, and that is affecting the wider body politic.

However, whilst TGiE aspires to a universal welfare state structure within exile, and is certainly employing state-like rhetoric and individualising strategies, this project is hampered by the legal limitations faced by this unrecognised government and its lack of a territorial base. There are important and stark differentiations within this state-citizen relationship, as not only is welfare provision restricted to Tibetans residing in India and Nepal, but within this section of the population access to welfare services is highly uneven. Central to this is the role and geography of exile institutions. Running counter to the process of de-institutionalisation in many Western states, institutions such as monasteries, schools, refugee reception centres and cultural institutes are at the core of the Tibetan diaspora. Not only do 25% of the exiled Tibetan population live in residential institutions (Planning Commission 2000) but, rather than 'demarcated spaces to which... socially dependent populations have been more or less forcefully "exiled"' (Philo and Parr 2000: 513) these institutions are a central and vibrant part of the community. Such institutions also have a disciplinary function in the Foucauldian sense. For, through regulating individuals' moral and social behaviour, these institutions seek 'to restrain, control, treat, "design" and "produce" particular and supposedly improved versions of human minds and bodies' (*ibid*) and thereby encourage people to lead lives of 'benefit to society' (General Manager, Rajpur handicraft settlement, 24.04.2007).

As well as being a central element in the project of cultural preservation and community cohesion, this archipelago of Tibetan cultural, religious and welfare institutions across India and Nepal is central to how TGiE manages its dispersed population. Crucially, such institutions constitute the spatial concentration of welfare and governmental dependency, with the relationship between an individual and TGiE weakening from institutions, through Tibetan settlements where TGiE welfare services are 'on-site', to scattered populations which come under the jurisdiction of a TGiE Welfare Office, to those living in 'Indian society' and therefore beyond the government's reach. Indeed, unlike a conventional welfare state established within the bounded territory of a nation-state, it is

because the exile government lacks authority over the spaces between institutions (and settlements), that the role of these establishments is so heightened in this case.

Illustrating this is the case of newcomer refugees, a cohort which, without social or familial support, is often highly dependent on and closely regulated by TGiE, certainly for the first few years after coming into exile. A chain of institutions has been established by TGiE to deal with these new arrivals from Tibet, the majority of whom take an increasingly established route into exile via the TGiE's refugee reception centres in Kathmandu, Delhi and Dharamsala. After medical checks, testimonial interviews and an audience with the Dalai Lama, the Dharamsala reception centre seeks admission for newly arrived refugees into a range of exile institutions 'to prepare for their long-term rehabilitation' (Director, Dharamsala Refugee Reception Centre 05.04.2007). Children up to the age of 18 are sent to Tibetan residential schools in Dharamsala and Mussoorie; former political prisoners to an NGO which provides short term accommodation and vocational training (GuChuSum); monks and nuns to monasteries and nunneries in South India; the elderly to old people's homes; adults aged 18-30 to the 'Tibetan Transit School' where they attend Tibetan, English and computer classes for 1-3 years; and older lay adults to handicraft centres. This series of connected institutions is therefore an important mechanism through which TGiE attempts to incorporate newcomers into the community and, in providing such important welfare support, these refugees are often appreciative of and dependent on the exile government.

However, after newcomers graduate from or leave these institutions they face significant problems. For a start, the isolation and strict rules at many Tibetan schools and monasteries means that those resident there often have little experience of 'living in India'. With little or no savings, often no family in exile and a lack of recognised qualifications, newcomer refugees frequently spoke of their insecurity and vulnerability within India and, as mentioned above, difficulties integrating into the exile Tibetan community. In addition, many newcomer interviewees described a lack of support from the TGiE once 'outside' Tibetan institutions:

> 'After Transit School you are on your own two feet.... The government they do not help. I get no help from the Welfare Office. People don't go to Welfare Office if they have problems – they have to sort things themselves. No-one

> else helps. Officials work honestly but maybe they have no power to help... with our government we always have less power' (Tempa, 23.03.2007).

Crucially, neither TGiE welfare support, nor indeed the exile government's practices of social regulation, extend much beyond this archipelago of institutions. With its lack of a territorial base there is neither a welfare safety net in this case, nor a 'swarming of disciplinary mechanisms' (Foucault 1977: 211). Indeed, it is questionable the extent to which this can be a disciplinary society without the iconic disciplinary institution of the prison.

In presenting two contrasting pictures of the Tibetan 'welfare state' in exile – one of a state-like welfare ethos planning to role out standardised welfare support, the other of uneven access to services with welfare provision existing only in isolated Tibetan institutions and designated settlements – I want to consider what this means for TGiE's attempts to construct itself as a government. For those Tibetans resident in settlements or institutions the existence of TGiE was a source of comfort and even security in the otherwise vulnerable situation of exile:

> 'As we are a homeless nation our government is the only real thing we have... that we can call our own. So even if our government is not recognised by any other government, still we are so lucky to have it. Because of [our] government we don't feel like refugees – everything is provided for us... all is organised by Tibetans' (Osel, Lugsum-Samdupling, 26.11.2007).

However, a number of government interviewees expressed frustration that they could not do more for 'their people'. As one *Chitue* explained when describing his visit to Tibetan settlements in Arunachal Pradesh:

> 'I was amazing [*sic*] that these remote places have so many Tibetan structures... they were so far away but so familiar and all established by our government. But then also I feel frustrated that we cannot do more. I feel we should be doing more for our people, providing more, helping them more, but always we come up against problems – against barriers because we are in India. We can do little since we do not have the stamp of being a state... we cannot be a complete government for our people here' (Dawa, 27.02.2006).

This perception that it is in its failing to provide for the exile population that TGiE is falling short of its 'government' title was echoed in a discussion between a self-declared 'social worker' (Thupten) and older shopkeeper (Jampa) in Majnuka Tilla (05.06.2007):

> Thupten: for me I think our government could do more for our people... in some remote settlements – not Bylakuppe but in North-East – there people are so poor and have so much hardship. Our government it should be working to help them for day to day things, but instead all we have is meetings and discussion.
> Jampa:... but I think our government, it does OK, and we should not criticise. We are refugees, we have no country and here we are on borrowed land, so how can our government do all these things?
> Thupten: [interrupts] but living on borrowed land does not mean the responsibilities they are not there. We have no country but still our government it has to work. Why do we have our government here in first place? If our government does not help its people then why is it a government?
> Jampa: but for our government its hands are tied because we are in India. We have no land, we have not so many rights – the Indians they can tell our government you can do this, or you can't do this. But at the same time our youths they expect the government to help them with everything – with education, with work... the youths they are too dependent on our government, and on help from foreigners. For our people we need more initiative.

Such interview extracts portray a complex and conflicting account of TGiE as a government. On the one hand, the TGiE cannot meet both its own and its citizens expectations of a state-like provision of welfare. But, in addition to this opinion that there is 'not enough' government, Jampa's comments suggest a critique of there being 'too much' government. Indeed, this exchange rehearses familiar political debates, a point which in itself indicates the government-like status of TGiE. However, Jampa's argument points to an important additional viewpoint, one that is specific to the situation in exile and questions the very purpose of TGiE. For there are frustrations from some within the community that TGiE has over-prioritised the welfare needs of the exile population at the expense of the freedom struggle and the ultimate aim of returning to Tibet:

> 'What is the purpose of our government? What are they doing for our cause? All they do is sit down there and talk. We don't need this government, these schools, these hospitals. All we need is [a] bed and food and to work for our cause. There is too much time wasting going on here. Our people shouldn't be owning buildings, restaurants here – this isn't our country' (Gyatso, Majnuka Tilla, 10.11.2007).

6.3.2. Negotiating a 'welfare society' in exile

Expanding our view beyond the relationship between TGiE and its 'citizens' in exile, it is crucial to acknowledge that the exile government does not have a monopoly on welfare provision for its diaspora. Rather, echoing the 'welfare society' model of contemporary Western states, welfare support is provided by a complex array of actors, each of which vies for responsibility for the exile population. The

welfare providers in this case include international donors upon which TGiE's welfare programmes are heavily dependent (discussed in section 6.4), remittances from overseas Tibetans (see Prost 2006), the GoI and Tibetan NGOs. It is on the TGiE's relationship with the latter two actors that I want to focus attention here, as each illustrates different aspects of TGiE's role and functioning.

The GoI was instrumental in establishing and funding the settlements and in providing basic housing and rations in the early years. As noted in Chapters 3 and 5, discourses of guesthood, hospitality and rehabilitation are prevalent both in governmental debates regarding the Tibetan refugees in the late 1950s and early 1960s[114] and in interviews with retired and active Indian officials. On the one hand, there has been a gradual transition of administrative authority and responsibility for schools, medical facilities and settlements from GoI to TGiE. As a retired Ministry of Rehabilitation official explained:

> 'The inter-relationship between the Tibetan government and Government of India has transformed from functional to formal. By functional I mean formerly the Government of India had a lot of control over Tibetan government and community with its package of rehabilitation. So there was... there was need for Government of India to intervene in the community. Now the Indian government has no administrative control, so we say it's just a formal relationship' (Gopal, 05.06.2007).

On the other hand, like relations between the two administrations more generally, the relationship between welfare provision for the Tibetan exiles and the Indian state is complex and ambiguous. For example, there are often fuzzy boundaries in terms of welfare service provision, with Tibetan health and education facilities open to local Indians,[115] and Indian facilities available to Tibetans.[116] In addition, alongside continuing GoI provision of ration cards to some Tibetans,[117] its administration of emergency disaster relief to Tibetan communities equivalent to their local Indian counterparts and provision of funding to the TGiE for its welfare projects,[118] there is also ongoing GoI involvement in Tibetan-run welfare provision including the funding of 30 of the 85 Tibetan schools in India. The practical

[114] For example, Nehru's statement to the Lok Sabha, 27 April 1959 (TPPRC 2006b: 50-51).
[115] For example, in Majnuka Tilla the admission of neighbouring Indian students is seen as a strategy for ameliorating local tensions, (Headmaster, Samyeling Day School 06.06.2007).
[116] 29% of the exile Tibetans questioned in the Planning Commission's socio-economic survey (2000) used Indian hospitals (Planning Commission 2004: 59).
[117] In principal, Tibetan refugees who meet the stipulated requirements receive ration cards from the governments of the states in which they reside, although this has not been universally implemented. The ration card enables the holder to purchase government-subsidised necessities at reduced cost.
[118] 'The Ministry of Home Affairs has spent... Rs.18.17 crore [18,17,00000] up to December, 2006 on resettlement of Tibetan refugees (Ministry of Home Affairs 2008: 123) and during the period 1995-2000 the GoI funding accounted for 3.2% of funding for project expenditure and 8.8% for recurrent development expenditure (Planning Council 1994, Section 2.3.2.).

limitations arising from this include the fact that any construction project has to be authorised by the State Government and Tibetan schools must conform to the Indian curriculum, albeit with additional Tibetan language, religion and cultural classes. From the perspective of individual Tibetans in India, the range of welfare providers has the obvious effect of providing a choice of welfare services with, for example, some with the financial means choosing to access private Indian medical facilities and send their children to private Indian and international schools. Therefore, while the primary responsibility for the welfare of the exile population is taken by TGiE, authorisation and funding is often contingent on the GoI. As such, with regards to whose responsibility Tibetans in India are, who has exclusive rights over this population and who has a 'duty of care', the answer is both complex and contradictory, and indeed varies across time and space. The overlapping of Indian and Tibetan welfare services, and indeed service users therefore means that the Tibetan 'welfare state' is not a hermetically bounded entity with TGiE ruling on issues of inclusion and exclusion.

In contrast to the arguably compromised welfare role of TGiE vis-à-vis the Indian Government, the exile administration has a considerably more government-like relationship with Tibetan NGOs in exile. There are a plethora of such organisations of varying size, and focusing on different cohorts within the exile community. These include Kunphen drugs rehabilitation centre in Dharamsala, GuChuSum which provides welfare for former political prisoners and regional associations which offer basic welfare and financial support to Tibetans from their regions. Established in 1960, the most influential NGO in welfare terms is the TCV which runs 15 schools in India for over 17,000 students and is increasingly providing additional welfare services in poorer Tibetan communities, such as medical facilities and stipends for the elderly in Ladakh (Principal, TCV Sonamling, 21.05.2007). The number and range of NGOs within the exile community can be attributed to a number of factors including the influence of host state India with its vibrant NGO culture, their role in coordinating the disparate diaspora and providing a sense of security and solidarity within the refugee population and their ability to secure and deliver external funding to the wider community.

With regards to the relationship between TGiE and exile Tibetan NGOs, recent policy changes are significant in terms of the position of NGOs and, more importantly for this discussion, the construction of TGiE as a government in

relation to them. Whilst for many years, Tibetan NGOs have had to formally register with TGiE,[119] a series of policy directives issued by the *Kashag* in July 2007 set out mechanisms by which a clearer division between these institutions can be established:

> 'NGOs should be non-governmental... the NGOs should not... rely on or look up at the government. Neither should the government... interfere in, exercise influences over or otherwise make use of NGOs. Thus, it is important for both sides to maintain a proper standard of relationship and distance on a stable basis... In view of this, we are issuing... the following guidelines' (*Tibetan Review* 2008 43(3): 26).[120]

Such a distinction between TGiE and Tibetan NGOs is based on the rationale that with the TGiE's pursuit of a policy of autonomy in Tibet it found it necessary to distance itself from NGOs which have 'independence agendas' (Secretary, CRO Bangalore, 29.11.2007). Importantly, this distinction goes beyond the discursive and rhetorical, with the guidelines stipulating that TGiE officials are forbidden to take part in NGO meetings, TGiE-run health centres and staff must not associate with NGOs (in particular they are not to accompany protest marches) and;

> 'in cases of arrests or detentions by the local police (of Tibetans) as a result of their having taken part in any campaign action... no official or office of the Tibetan government (in exile) shall provide surety for bailing them out' (*Tibetan Review* 2008 43(3): 27).

Beyond the delineation of its policy stance vis-à-vis the future of Tibet, these guidelines and their enactment has two important and interrelated functions. Firstly, it can be seen as TGiE marking itself out as a government, distinguishing itself from the types of organisation that it has sometimes been labelled as. No longer a glorified NGO, TGiE is positioning itself within discourses of statehood. Translating this to an everyday level, a number of TGiE interviewees spoke of wearing two hats – one their government job, the other their personal convictions – and of having to be increasingly careful in distinguishing between their professional and personal lives. Secondly, the establishment of boundaries for NGOs and the increasingly strict regulation of government interaction with these actors forms part of a wider TGiE project of creating and demarcating a sphere of Tibetan 'civil society' in exile distinct from itself as a government. Acknowledging that NGOs are constituent elements of rather than conterminous with the notion of

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[119] This is a process which assists NGOs' registration under the GoI's Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 1976 which permits them to solicit funds from abroad.

[120] The full content of the guidelines was carried in the 8 August 2007 edition of *Tibetan Freedom*, the exile government's Tibetan-language weekly. The extract quoted here is a translation by the editor of *Tibetan Review*.

'civil society' (McIlwaine 1998), such a project also involves the process of democratisation in exile and the Dalai Lama's attempts to reduce his prominence in the political sphere (see Chapter 8).

So, why does the TGiE invest such effort in discursively and materially creating a 'civil society' distinct from the 'state'? For a start, in light of the central role of 'strengthening civil society' in development policy circles (McIlwaine 1998), it is a strategic performance of liberal democratic governance aimed at a Western (donor) audience. In addition to engaging with discourses of development and good governance, the delineation of civil society and the state in this case is also an attempt by TGiE to speak the language and perform the actions of modern statehood. For, in the classical terminology of political sociology the separation of state from civil society plays a central role in the organisation of modern political power. Whilst such distinctions are dismissed by those examining the Foucauldian mechanisms of power (Miller and Rose 1990), I want to argue here that it is precisely this deliberate and public separation of the TGiE from NGOs that forms a key part in the exile administration's attempts to establish governing capabilities. Thus, read through Mitchell's (1991) notion of the state as a set of effects which make structures such as the state and society appear to exist, the TGiE's attempted construction of separate spheres of the state and civil society can be seen as an important legitimising strategy.

6.3.3. Summary

Reflecting on this complex picture of welfare provision and providers, state-citizen relations and the construction of a 'civil society', I want to remain with the ideas of legitimacy and statehood. On the one hand, the existence of multiple welfare providers and TGiE's negotiation of its position within this matrix resonates with Rose and Miller's assertion that the

> 'centres of government are multiple; it is not a question of the power of the centralised state, but of how, in relation to what mentalities and devices, by means of what intrigues, alliances and flows – is this locale or that able to act *as* a centre' (1992: 185).

However, in attempting to 'act as a centre' the TGiE can also be seen as speaking to more conventionally state-like discourses. Although not uniformly experienced, TGiE's aim of providing a safety net of minimum welfare for its population in exile is significant. For, whilst TGiE cannot realise the security component of governmentality (it lacks institutions such as a police or military to defend its

population) and therefore cannot fulfil the 'state-as-protector' role for its exiled people, through the apparatus of welfare it does to a large extent perform the role of provider. Thus, as a governmental function TGiE *can* perform, it is in the realm of welfare provision and the construction of relations of rights and responsibilities with its 'citizens' that the possibilities of a Tibetan 'state' in exile are most apparent. In contrast, with the dependence of many exile Tibetans on TGiE moving beyond basic welfare needs – or as one respondent put it 'these days we have our "bellyful"' (Samdup, Dekyiling, 19.04.2007) – TGiE is increasingly having to face the challenging task of dealing with economic issues. Consequently, in highlighting the economy as a sphere of governance on a par with the population and civil society, I now want to turn to the TGiE's role in managing and governing economic activities in exile.

6.4 Constructing an economy in exile: discursive possibilities and material limitations.

> *'The economy came into being... as the field of operation for new powers of planning, regulation, statistical enumeration and representation. Through these novel forms of political rationality and practice it became possible to imagine the economy as a self-contained sphere, distinct from the social, the cultural and other spheres'*
>
> (Mitchell 1998: 91).

A recurrent narrative within both interviews with TGiE officials and TGiE publications is the series of developmental transitions that the community has experienced during its 50 years in exile, from the welfare stage of meeting basic needs, through to the rehabilitation of Tibetan society within the exile settlements, to the contemporary aspiration of economic sustainability. This shift 'to a higher socioeconomic level with characteristics of more developed countries' (Bhatia *et al* 2002: 421) means both that the issues of economic self-sufficiency and sustainable development are complex and challenging, and that the exile community is now having to take responsibility for these new challenges largely on their own (CTRC 2003). Central to this are economic issues regarding employment, sustainable livelihoods and financial security.[121] These economic challenges and concerns can therefore be seen to fundamentally threaten the idealised vision of the exile population that the TGiE strives for: as cohesive, nationalised and preserved within the sanctuary spaces of the settlements. In light of this, TGiE has

[121] For example, with limited land holdings, a lack of employment opportunities in the settlements – or at least 'meaningful employment' for university graduates – and limited numbers of jobs within TGiE, young Tibetans are often compelled to look for work outside the community (Additional Secretary, Department of Home, 18.03.2006).

increasingly engaged with economic issues and, I will argue, the idea of an economy in exile. Indeed, the link between the construction of a population and the emergence of political economy can be traced to the development of modern governmentality, as '[t]o govern properly, to ensure the happiness and prosperity of the population, it is necessary to govern through a particular register, that of the *economy*' (Dean 1999: 19. emphasis in original). After sketching out the economic limitations faced by TGiE, I will address two key questions. How does the TGiE go about conceiving of and creating an economy in exile? And why does TGiE invest effort, time and resources into such a seemingly chimerical project? Drawing on the work of Mitchell (1998, 2002) and Miller and Rose (1990; 1992) I will argue that not only is TGiE attempting to observe, regulate and manage the economic activities of its population, but it is creating – at least discursively if not materially – a Tibetan economy in exile as a 'separate sphere' over which it can govern.

6.4.1. The impossibility of a Tibetan economy in exile?

With regards to the shift from basic survival to more secondary needs, a number of second generation Tibetans spoke of concerns regarding the lack of financial security in India:

> 'You see here we have no security, no security at all... it is hard to get jobs, we cannot own property, there are no pensions or health insurance so for many people they feel they have to move... to move abroad' (Choeying, Bangalore, 03.12.2007).

As such, it is arguable that as the community becomes more socio-economically advanced with more sophisticated demands being put on TGiE the exile government has reached the limits of what it can provide. Indeed, at first glance the limitations facing TGiE's control over the economic practices of its exile community appear considerable, and the idea of an exile Tibetan economy fantastical. For a start, given its existence within the sovereign state of India, TGiE has no currency, no national bank and therefore no monetary policies. Similarly, its lack of contiguous, bounded territory means that its ability to define, foster and regulate a 'national' economy is severely restricted, and its job creation capabilities extremely limited. Thus, without judicial powers and 'the stamp of being a state' (Vice-chair, TPiE, 29.04.2006), the exiled administration has limited legal control over the economic activities of its population.

Illustrative of such economic restrictions is the case of the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce (TCC). Established in June 2005 as a platform for Tibetan businesses in

India and Nepal, the TCC has faced significant challenges due to TGiE's lack of legal status. As the TCC's Deputy Director, and then a prominent Delhi-based businessman explained:

> 'Our Chamber of Commerce is unique because it is with no state.... It is a Chamber of Commerce in name rather than reality because our government it cannot provide incentives for business and... really we cannot lobby the Indian government about trade agreements and taxation – they will never listen to us! So really as an organisation we are running below-par I think' (Bhutuk, 12.11.2007).

> 'This Chamber of Commerce is for me a waste of time. It has no real powers.... The purpose of a Chamber of Commerce is for business people to lobby the government to reduce trade tariffs for their exports, reduce business taxes, increase international trade and the like, but our government doesn't have the power to do any of these things.... In fact, the Indian government it went to see the Finance minister when TCC was launched because they were worried our government was going to collect taxes from Tibetan businesses and this would break Indian law. So our minister he reassured the Indian government that TCC was just a committee! So in reality what can TCC do? Nothing!' (Tsering, 11.03.2007).

Indeed, Tibetan economic activities are both highly dependent on and restricted by the Indian state: individual Tibetans take loans from Indian banks, Tibetan businesses register with the GoI and wealthier Tibetans pay income tax to the Indian Government. India's rapidly changing economy has also directly affected the Tibetan community with the increasing regulation of and restrictions on the informal economy through the 'beautification' of city streets and harassment from local authorities causing significant problems for Tibetan seasonal traders (Secretary, CRO Bangalore, 29.11.2007). A second significant limitation on TGiE's economic autonomy is its continuing dependence on Western patrons, with the exile administration's welfare programmes being heavily reliant on external funding from international donors including NGOs, charitable trusts and individuals.[122] Foreign patrons are also sought for various exile Tibetan institutions where Klieger (1992) argues a traditional patron-client relationship has been re-established and re-worked in exile. At the individual level, a widespread system of sponsorship of Tibetans by Western benefactors, referred to in Tibetan as *rogs ram*, plays an increasingly large role in Tibetans' livelihoods (Prost 2006: 251).[123]

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[122] During the first decade of exile, refugees received $5,300,000 in direct aid from US government (Grunfled 1987: 189-190), and in the period 1995-2000 74.9% of the total funding for project expenditure and 30% of funding for recurrent development expenditure came from foreign donors (Planning Council 1994, Section 2.3.2).

[123] Prost reports that the majority of Tibetan exile families in Dharamsala receive some form of *rogs ram* for their children to see them through primary and secondary education (2006: 239). Such international

With such limitations, a Tibetan economy in exile appears to be an unviable proposition. However, the situation is not as clear cut as the restrictions outlined above would indicate. The economic activities of Tibetans in India are neither entirely assimilated into the Indian economy, nor completely reliant on foreign aid. Rather, individual Tibetans, Tibetan institutions and TGiE itself have considerable economic agency. For example, the exiled administration has increasingly institutionalised its relationship with international donors, actively managing funding priorities and controlling the flow and allocation of resources within the exile community.[124] At an individual level, informal economic exchanges such as loans from relatives, monasteries and wealthy individuals within the community are often more popular than credit from Indian banks, and remittances from relatives based in the West are an increasingly important source of income for families in the settlements (this was particularly the case in Clementown and Lugsum-Samdupling). In addition, Tibetan businesses, especially in tourist destinations such as Dharamsala, Darjeeling and Delhi, are increasingly successful, often employing local workers. Moreover, as explored below, TGiE is involving itself ever more in the economic life of the diaspora.

6.4.2. Constructing an economic sphere in exile

The upheaval of displacement and the re-establishing of a society and government in a foreign land inevitably brought with it rapid transformations in economic practices and relations. Dispossessed of their land and the taxes it accrued, monasteries and aristocratic landlords were no longer the economic elite (Subramanya 2004). The reliance instead on settled agriculture, petty business and tourism 'has generated new relations of production and exchange, both communal and individual, and new class, gender and ethnic structures' (McGukin 1997: 237).[125] Such fundamental shifts forced the Tibetan leadership to reconsider both its principles of government and the economic relations it has with its now exile population. Following Miller and Rose, this was broadly a shift 'from a notion that the ruler need do no more than extract from his or her subjects whatever wealth they may produce, to a notion that a ruler should seek to renew and even augment

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assistance at a range of scales often comes with the expectation that local communities will transform in some way so as to accommodate their patrons' norms and values' (Frechette 2002: x). As such, the recipients - whether institutions or individuals - need to prove themselves as worthy and charming by demonstrating a true claim to 'Tibetan refugeehood' (Lafitte 1999; Prost 2006).

[124] For example, the TGiE uses the IDPs to set out its funding priorities and established a 'Social and Resource Development Fund' under the Department of Finance as a platform for interaction between TGiE and its increasing number of bilateral donors.

[125] One notable continuation of economic practices from Tibet is long-distance trading, re-worked in the exile situation in the form of sweater selling (McGukin 1997).

such wealth' (1990: 12). However, it is only recently, with the delineation of contemporary challenges being faced, that economic issues have come to be seen as 'a catalogue of problems *for* government' (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 310. emphasis in original). Understanding issues of government and economy as intrinsically linked, such problematisation of economic issues entailed the construction of an economic field which 'could be measured and calculated as though it were a free-standing object' (Mitchell 2008: 1116). Tracing this 'process of articulating the national economy as an object to be known, recorded, calculated and operated upon' (Miller and Rose 1990: 12), I want to again turn to Hannah's (2000) framework of observational moments, normalising judgement and the regulation of conduct.

Considering observational moments, as with the Tibetan population in exile figures and statistics concerning the financial status of the Tibetan community in exile have been produced and discussed since the first days in exile. This includes a detailed report on the first ten years in exile (Office of the Dalai Lama 1969) as well as the series of IDPs and budget reports from TGiE departments and institutions, the production and consumption of which can be seen as central to the emergence of a Tibetan political economy in exile. A central element in both the production of knowledge about economic activities, and development of a totalising vision of the exile economic situation was the discursive and material creation of distinct economic sectors. Broadly chronological, these include agriculture, industry (albeit short-lived),[126] handicrafts, informal trading (sweater-selling) and private enterprise.

Following the work of Murdoch and Ward (1997), agriculture in the exile settlements can be seen as 'brought into being' as a discrete economic sector through a variety of technologies and practices. These included the collation of detailed data (Office of the Dalai Lama 1969)[127] and subsequent statistical analysis (Planning Council 1994, Section 4), the creation of an 'Agricultural Section' within the Department of Home and the development of training programmes for agriculturalists. Rendering agriculture visible and thus governable, 'farmers were

[126] Industry based settlements were established in Himachal Pradesh in the late 1960s with the assistance of the GoI. Eight industrial projects were initiated and coordinated under the aegis of the 'Tibetan Industrial Rehabilitation Society', including woollen mills, tea estates, lime processing and a fibreglass factory. However, due to the community's lack of prior experience and skills in this sector and insufficient working capital most of the projects ran into problems and closed in the early 1970s (Kharat 2003b). The settlements survived however, with their economic focus shifting to small-scale cultivation, sweater-selling, carpet-weaving and other handicrafts. The latter has become one of the chief sources of income for the exile community, particularly for women and newcomer refugees.

[127] This report includes data on land brought under cultivation, crop yields and prices, wages paid to Tibetan labourers, food ration allocations and co-operative society accounts.

increasingly incorporated into the prevailing mode of governmentality' (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 309) and this continues today with the rolling out of TGiE schemes for organic agriculture, soil conservation and sustainable irrigation. These technologies of government were replicated in the creation of the other economic sectors with, for example, TGiE surveys of sweater sellers (*Paljor Bulletin* June 2005: 16) and Tibetan businesses (TCC 2006) and the establishment of a 'Business Unit' within the Department of Finance. Indeed, whilst formal and informal business enterprises have formed an important part of exilic life for decades, it is only in recent years that TGiE has documented them, seeking to bring these activities under its gaze and thus to regulate them.

Alongside this monitoring and classification of economic activities, TGiE also engages in processes of totalisation and standardisation. Attempting to both picture and promote the Tibetan 'economy' as an integrated whole, TGiE has charted and documented levels of income and income disparity, employment trends and total domestic product (Planning Commission 2004: 92), and developed a 'comprehensive strategy for developing livelihoods, employment and income-generation within the Refugee Community' (Planning Council 1994, Section 4.3.3). The exile administration also provides a detailed breakdown of its budget each year.

Shifting from the techniques through which TGiE comes to know its economic activities to the discourses through which it imagines and normalises the economic life of its exiled citizens, I want to focus on the administration's economic philosophies and policies. Whilst TGiE's implementation of macro-economic policies is severely limited given its existence within the Indian state, this has not impeded it from staking out its economic vision. Central to this are a range of discourses which both speak to broader international norms of good governance and promote a distinctly Tibetan set of values. These include discourses of a 'middle path economy' between capitalism and socialism, diversification of economic activities, budgetary discipline and self-sufficiency.

Drawing directly on the Tibetan experience of Chinese communism in Tibet and Western capitalism in exile, the idea of a 'middle path economy' is based on 'the principle of cooperation, not competition and on need and not greed' (Additional Secretary, Department of Finance, 02.05.2007). Forming a core tenet of Samdhong Rimpoche's political philosophy of *satyagraha*, this vision of the economy is starting

to be implemented through the system of agricultural and handicraft cooperatives. An integral part of the exile settlements, the cooperatives provide common services and support and the collective marketing of produce for settlers whose farming has always been undertaken by individual households as a private activity on their own land (President, Lugsum-Samdupling Co-operative Society, 28.11.2007). As well as providing a route between capitalism and communism, the cooperatives form a key element of TGiE's vision of economic self-sufficiency in exile. Whilst dependence on foreign aid is still deemed necessary, there is increasing TGiE criticism of this reliance on external support: '[T]he mindset of scavenging for foreign aid needs to be changed by striving to emerge... to the level of self-reliance' (*Paljor Bulletin* June 2005: 21). This long term vision of a financially self-reliant TGiE and economically self-contained and self-sufficient Tibetan communities (Finance and DIIR *Kalon*, 10.04.2006) is currently being pursued through the diversification of agriculture and the establishment of small-scale industries within the settlements. However, these policies are proving controversial with many in the younger generation who either do not want to, or cannot, make their livelihood within the settlements. Arguing that such policies are out of sync with socio-economic changes in India and the desires of young Tibetans, one young web-designer in Delhi asserted:

> 'Our government is taking us in the wrong direction – why focusing on settlements and organic farming? This is going backwards. Which people of my generation with a college degree want to go back to the settlements and farm?' (Topgyal, 30.10.2007).

Turning to the final moment in the creation and governance of the economy in exile, I want to shift attention to 'attempts to transform the calculative procedures of economic actors' (Miller and Rose 1990: 2). Across each of the sectors discussed above there is a notable trend of TGiE increasingly attempting to regulate and regularise the economic life of its 'citizens' in exile, and yet simultaneously to create the idea of an economic sphere that can be acted upon.[128] In order to illustrate this, I want to focus on the business sector within the exile economy. In a remarkably similar way to TGiE's changing relationship with NGOs, the exile government has both distanced itself and formalised its relationship with private businesses in exile. To set some context, TGiE has had a complex and often contradictory relationship with private enterprise over the years. At a 'national'

[128] This ranges from the establishment of a handicraft export house for independent producers (Secretary, Department of Home, 06.11.2007), the implementation of organic agriculture schemes, and attempts to regularise and legalise the trade in sweater (*Paljor Bulletin* June 2005: 21).

level, TGiE for many years ran a number of businesses in Nepal and India, including hotels, a travel agency, gas distribution company and agricultural feeds business, the profits from which contributed directly to the TGiE budget (Planning Council 1994, Section 4.4.5). However, declining profits in the 1990s and the *satyagraha* political philosophy of Samdhong Rimpoche's administration saw the 12th *Kashag* privatise these businesses and return the capital deposits totalling 211.7 million Rupees to the Tibetan public (*Paljor Bulletin* June 2005: 22). As the Additional Secretary at the Department of Finance explained:

> 'relying on this borrowed capital is not good, especially with the big risks with business and we were concerned that one day we would not be able to repay the debts.... And our constitution it is based on the fundamental principals of truth, non-violence and genuine democracy and so... so engaging with business where there can be dishonesty and competition to make biggest profits, so this is not in keeping with our principles' (02.05.2007).

Following this privatisation of government-run businesses TGiE accorded increasing priority to the promotion of trade and commerce within the community, with businesses perceived as key to providing employment opportunities, fostering links across the diaspora and diversifying the exile economy (Business Officer, Department of Finance, 10.04.2006). As a report published by the TCC states:

> 'We should encourage more of internal business relationships. If something is being produced by Tibetans then the marketing and the retailing part of the products needs to be taken up by the Tibetans. And the profit should reach the Tibetan artisans who produce the product. Wealth inside the community should benefit the community itself. Big Tibetan business houses also should employ skilled and unemployed Tibetans' (2006: 10).

However, whilst TGiE is actively promoting private enterprise in the community through providing micro-credit and training to young entrepreneurs and establishing the TCC, it is simultaneously distancing itself from this newly constructed sphere of Tibetan business. As Samdhong Rimpoche outlined in a statement to the TCC:

> 'Generally, a government is best who governs the least. That is why even TGiE is trying to engage itself the least in the businesses of Tibetan people. Therefore... from our side, it is important for TCC to stay as a NGO in principle without having to depend on TGiE and should formulate its own plans and policies' (TCC 2006: 9).

Such engagement with the exile business community is indicative not only of TGiE's relationship with economic activities more generally, but also of its

engagement with a form of liberal rationality (Lippert 1999). It is a negotiation between intervening in the lives of its citizens, and retracting from such intervention: a delicate balance between state regulation and pulling back from governing in certain areas to allow the 'free enterprise of individuals' (Rose and Miller 1992). Paralleling TGiE's construction of a sphere of civil society, this attitude of 'managerial liberalism' (Murdoch and Ward 1997: 310) can, I argue, be seen as TGiE attempting to engage in a more mature stage of governmentality. For, in increasingly perceiving the economy as an 'autonomous level of reality' (Clayton 2000: 319) TGiE is establishing itself – a government engaged in the realm of politics – as distinct from the economy.

Aimed at both internal and external audiences, the fact that construction of an economy-like entity is an important legitimising strategy for TGiE indicates why the exile administration invests so much in creating – through discourses, practices and institutions – the 'idea' of a Tibetan economy in exile. Not only does discussion of an 'economy' demonstrate to the international community the increasing financial independence of the diaspora and economic management capabilities of TGiE, but the creation of a 'national economy' is key to establishing the boundaries of and therefore reinforcing the existence of a Tibetan nation in exile. As the TGiE itself puts it, 'the capacity to accumulate and invest capital and to develop human resources... plays an important role in fostering the economic growth of a nation and its people' (Planning Council 1994, Section 4.5). Such language resonates closely with work by scholars of governmentality on the relationship between the state and the economy. For example, Mitchell argues that the development of the economy as a discursive object and autonomous domain 'provided a new language in which the nation-state could speak for itself and imagine its existence as something natural, bounded and subject to political management' (1998: 90).

It is in the collection of 'voluntary taxes' from the exile population that the TGiE's construction and regulation of its 'economy' appears most state-like. Instituted by a group of 'devoted Tibetans' in 1972, the collection of voluntary contributions – *chatrel* – from Tibetans in exile has been increasingly regulated and managed by TGiE.[129] Not only is *chatrel* an increasingly important source of income for TGiE, a fact the administration is keen to stress (e.g. Planning Council 1994 Section 2.1.1),

[129] *Chatrel* rates vary according to age, place of residence, and income. For adult Tibetans resident in India, Nepal and Bhutan the *chatrel* rate is 58 Indian Rupees, compared to $46 US Dollars for those resident in other states. For those on salaried income the rate is 4% of their basic salary (Department of Finance 2005).

but its payment is seen as a legitimising strategy whereby Tibetan 'citizens' in exile render legitimacy to the government and through this act are themselves recognised as bona fide 'Tibetans' in exile (see Chapter 7). However, whilst state-like in terms of the relationship between TGiE and those it purports to govern, *chatrel* does not have the legal status of conventional state taxation systems (see Lieberman 2003). TGiE has no legal basis on which to levy taxes and therefore *chatrel* payments are technically voluntary as there is no legal means of enforcing payment and to call for mandatory taxes within India would have been unlawful.[130] Having said this, and indicative of the ambiguous relationship between TGiE and statehood, the exile administration does employ significant social coercive strategies. For example, paying *chatrel* is a prerequisite to functioning in the exiled community, being essential for accessing TGiE welfare services and stipends, admission to Tibetan schools and eligibility for TGiE jobs. Moreover, TGiE is careful to stress that *chatrel* – which indeed translates as 'tax' – is not a 'donation' as this connotes a different form of relationship, and crucially one not based on obligation and duty (Department of Finance 2005).

The issue of taxation also highlights the complex and contradictory spatiality of the Tibetan economy in exile. As Callon argues, the economy must operate as a series of boundaries, distinctions, exceptions and exclusions (1998, cited in Mitchell 2002: 9). So, whilst increasingly being challenged by transnational economic flows, for conventional nation-states their bounded territory delineates the limits of and therefore in many ways defines, their national economy. Without such a contiguous territory, or indeed legal jurisdiction over the territories within which TGiE does operate, no such 'national' economy can be taken for granted. Nevertheless, TGiE has attempted to establish Tibetan economic space in exile. For example, the administrative framework established to collect *chatrel* in each settlement in South Asia and the Offices of Tibet collecting payments from 'overseas' Tibetans is an attempt by TGiE to ensure uniformity of its governance across the diaspora and standardise this important symbolic and material economic practice. Whilst not a territorialising strategy per se, the routinised practices of *chatrel* binds the population together and simultaneously positions the TGiE at the centre of the community. The taxation system also points to the broader territorial and networked components of the exile Tibetan economy. On the one hand, the Tibetan

[130] Similar semantic cautiousness was employed with regards to the establishment of the TCC as, with concerns from the GoI that such an organisation would compete with Indian chambers of commerce, the organisation was registered as a 'welfare society' (Assistant Director, TCC, 12.11.2007).

economy is obviously considerably more visible and 'present' in the settlements than the scattered communities. Moreover, TGiE is actively fostering such locally-bounded Tibetan economies with the encouraged clustering of Tibetan economic activities, and a degree of regulation and indeed exclusion of Indian economic practices.[131] On the other hand, transnational economic networks are also important in terms of *chatrel* contributions from the Tibetans in the West and increasingly systematised business networks across the diaspora.

6.4.3. Summary

Returning to the significant economic limitations faced by TGiE and contrasting this to the exile administration's attempts to construct an economy in exile over which it can act in a government-like way, I want to briefly consider the relationship between the discursive and the material. At face value, the Tibetan economy in exile is certainly more rhetorical than pragmatic. It exists primarily in the likes of parliamentary discussions, budgetary reports and TCC meetings rather than through economic outputs, the value of a currency or the flow of goods. However, rather than dismissing the Tibetan economy as an elaborate fiction on these grounds, and acknowledging that the distinction between the material world and its representation is comparatively recent and relatively unstable (Mitchell 2002), I want to argue that this case throws a valuable spotlight on the production of the economic sphere more generally. Following Mitchell,

> 'The power of the economy as a discursive process lies exactly with fixing this effect of the real (economy) versus its representation. The proliferation of models, statistics, plans and programmes of economic discourse all claim to represent the different elements and relationships of a real object, the national economy. Yet this object... is itself constituted as a discursive process' (1998: 92).

In terms of TGiE, its substantial legal and territorial limitations mean that in all likelihood any 'real object' of a national economy will fail to materialise, at least in the near future. As such, the fact that TGiE is nevertheless attempting to discursively separate the 'economy' from the 'state' means that this case offers a fascinating and valuable insight into the initial processes through which the economy as a governable sphere is willed into being.

[131] Whilst economic exchange with local Indian communities is vital and ongoing (Arakeri 1980), TGiE is actively encouraging the vocational training of young Tibetans in skills such as carpentry, auto mechanics and cookery in order for such activities to be taken over by Tibetans to the exclusion of current Indian workers (Pemba, 16.04.2007).

6.5 Conclusion: constructing spheres of governance

In examining TGiE's governance of lives and livelihoods in exile, this chapter has examined 'how different domains are constituted as governable and administrable' (Dean 1999: 29). Though TGiE faces considerable limitations in providing for and governing of these spheres – with the economy proving notably more challenging than the population – nevertheless its partitioning out and attempts at managing these domains of governance in exile is significant. Crucially, the creation of the population, civil society and economy in exile as realms which can be acted upon simultaneously defines TGiE by what it is not. TGiE is not the Tibetan population but regulates it; TGiE is not Tibetan civil society but shapes it; TGiE is not the exile economy but manages it. Following Rose and Miller's assertion that '[K]nowledges of the economy, or of the nature of health, or of the problem of poverty are essential elements in programmes that seek to exercise legitimate and calculated power over them' (1992: 182), I want to argue that it is through such strategies of governmentality that TGiE is constructed and legitimised as a governing entity. Therefore, employing a range of techniques of governmentality – from regulating the health and reproductive behaviour of its population to creating totalising visions of the development of its exile community and differentiating itself from exile NGOs and businesses – TGiE has in many regards constructed what Mitchell sees as the state effect'.

Importantly, TGiE has also internalised these strategies of governmentality. Increasingly monitoring and managing its own operations, the exile 'civil service' has defined roles, hierarchies, training schemes and indeed pay-scales standardised across the diaspora (Public Service Commissioner, 16.03.2006). The TGiE is audited by the 'Office of the Auditor General' and working hours of government offices are consistent across the dispersed settlements and scattered communities. Such governing of governance therefore resonates with Foucault's (1991) assertion that through the process of governmentality by the state, the state itself becomes governmentalised.

Not only is a governmentality 'toolkit' useful for understanding the governance strategies of TGiE, but I argue that this case is also a valuable site for exploring the idea of governmentality itself. As I have illustrated in this chapter, the nascency of TGiE's mechanisms of governance and the fact that territory, legitimacy and authority cannot be taken for granted in this case make this one of

those situations 'in which the activity of governing comes to be called into question... in which actors and agents of all sorts must pose the questions of how to govern' (Dean 1999: 27). A key area where I have argued the case of TGiE can contribute to thinking on governmentality is the intersection of biopolitics with cultural politics. As an ostensibly non-Western case, TGiE raises the question of whether Foucault's undeniably Eurocentric notion of governmentality can be translated to different contexts (Legg 2007b). Whilst caution should be taken in such an exercise (Philo 2001), I want to argue that by taking concepts such as governmentality and biopower to 'unfamiliar surroundings' and investigating them through ethnographic methods this recasts and empirically grounds these often abstract ideas (see Chatterjee 2004). Therefore, in light of Hannah's assertion that 'governmentality always acquires its specific form in concrete cultural context' (2000: 222) I have argued that in this case the construction of the exile population as a cultural repository means that TGiE combines cultural politics with biopolitics in its regulation of this population.

In addition, I want to argue that this case is instructive for debates regarding the extent to which governmentality is a state or non-state practice, and the relationship between governmentality and territory. With regards to the latter, governmentality's eschewal of an inextricable relationship between territory and sovereignty opens up a looser relationship between governance and territory than conventional state theory and has thus proved a useful framework for examining TGiE. As alluded to in various sections of this chapter, the case of TGiE foregrounds the important distinction between governing strategies and the realms over which governance is enacted. As a polity without either contiguous territory or jurisdiction over the territory it does operate in, TGiE is limited in its governance over territory per se. In light of this, the role of the population in exile as a realm over which TGiE can govern is amplified in this case, and it is notable that the exile population, welfare state and economy are each defined in nationalistic terms rather than territorially. Nevertheless, this does not prevent the exile administration from employing territorialising strategies of governance and, as I have illustrated, TGiE's governance is often more effective when it is territorialised within the spaces of the exile settlements. Not only is this the case with TGiE's regulation of the mobility and residency of its population, spatial concentration of governmental dependency in its institutions and management of economic activities within the settlements, but the exile population itself is strongly connected with territory in the eyes of TGiE. For example, the population in the

settlements is perceived as most authentically Tibetan, those scattered in Indian cities are thus problematised, and Tibetans residing in the West are literally and symbolically distant from the exile government.

Therefore, despite the lack of territory, there is a distinct geography of governmentality and biopolitics in this case. It is a geography which is partial, fragmented, differentiated and institutionally dense, and where the practices of governmentality are concentrated in the bounded spaces of the settlements yet at the same time TGiE is constructed as a centralised governing authority. Indeed, through its collation of population and economic data, production of statistical analysis, demographic surveys and IDPs, school curricula and governmental practices, the TGiE headquarters in Dharamsala has become, to use Latour's term, a 'centre of calculation' (1987: 215). Thereby acting as a locus of government for this exiled population, and being able to govern at a distance through such practices (Murdoch and Ward 1997), this crucially justifies and reinforces the governance and state-like role and position of TGiE within the exile community, establishing it as a provider for and promoter of the exile community.

Turning to the issue of statehood, it is important to acknowledge that governmentality does not provide a tool to differentiate between state and non-state polities. Indeed, this theory of power is in many ways useful precisely because it is not restricted to the sovereign state and can be exercised by multiple agencies (Miller and Rose 1990: 3). This is certainly apparent in this case, both in terms of multiple sites of authority – the TGiE, GoI, international donors and Tibetan NGOs – dotting the exile political landscape (Allen 2003b), and the governing strategies of TGiE itself lending weight to the call to expand the researcher's gaze to the technologies of government employed by non-state entities (Rose-Redwood 2006). However, whilst governmentality does not allow us to specify the type of polity TGiE is, a focus on the exile administration's governing practices and discourses does give us a valuable insight into the statehood aspirations and limitations of this polity. On the one hand, TGiE employs and defines itself through a number of instruments and performances of statecraft. These include the census-like TDS, school curricula, the planning commission and state archives, and the establishment of state-like relationships of welfare rather than charity with its exile 'citizens'. In addition, in its formalised and distanciated relationships with Tibetan NGOs and businesses in exile, TGiE is aspiring to a particular liberal democratic mode of government. Moreover, though its modes of governmentality do

not make TGiE a state, the process of constructing a population, civil society and economy in exile suggests that TGiE is striving towards the state effect identified by Mitchell (1991).

On the other hand, however, as indicated at various points in this chapter, the state-ness of TGiE is always partial, is attuned to the situation in exile and is decidedly shaped by the freedom struggle and preparations for returning to Tibet. Furthermore, its governmentality is frequently undercut by its inability to legally compel or coerce its citizens to obey its orders, from cooperating with the census to remaining in the exile settlements. As such, it is law which is the limiting factor in this case. TGiE can enact the state-as-provider role, but not state-as-protector. Therefore, despite governmentality being promoted as a liberation from the theoretical privilege of sovereignty and an analytic of power that does not take law as its model, the legal and the sovereign still often underpin practices of governance. As Dean argues, 'modern forms of government cannot do without sovereign authority and without instruments such as law' (1999: 203). And it is to issues of law, legal status and regimes of identification that I turn to in the next chapter where attention shifts from TGiE's construction of a population in exile, to the negotiation of political and legal identities and the relationships individual Tibetans have with their government.

Chapter 7
Citizens and Refugees: Constructing and Negotiating Political and Legal Identities in Exile

I meet my friend Kunchok in a café in central London for our weekly catch-up on his studies and my attempts at basic Tibetan, but Kunchok arrives agitated and anxious, tripping over words to explain what has happened. His residency rights in India have been terminated because he didn't renew his papers in person; he cannot return to India but he also can't extend his Indian-issued travel documents. The only valid papers he has are a UK visa that is about to expire, and a Tibetan 'passport' that no state recognises. Deportation to Chinese-governed Tibet would almost certainly lead to his arrest and detention. Over several hours his complex tale of opaque bureaucracy, sometimes-bribeable officials, adopted 'fathers' in India, new registration legislation and powerless Tibetan officials unfolds. What emerges is an individual who has found the boundary between two states – one recognised, the other 'clandestine' – and slipped down the gap between them.[132]

7.1 Introduction

Having set out and explored the broad areas of TGiE's territoriality and governance in the previous two chapters, I now want to narrow the focus somewhat by turning attention to issues concerning political and legal identities in exile. The issue of identity is a vast and complex topic which scholars from across the social sciences have examined and debated in a variety of ways (e.g. Barth 1969; Calhoun 1994; Hall and du Gay 1996). Given the focus of this study, my aim here is to engage with 'identity' in a narrowly specified sense by focusing on the relationship between identity production and issues of sovereignty, territory and statehood. Whilst it is now widely acknowledged that identities are associated with multiple political affiliations arising at a range of scales and associated with diverse political actors and institutions (Taylor 1994; Agnew 1999), the territorially bounded nation-state still remains central to political identity categories. At the heart of the relationship between identity and the state is the construction of a binary between the citizen resident in a bounded national community and therefore the proper subject of political life, and its archetypal 'other', the refugee. Through such a binary, the state wields considerable authority in shaping political subjectivities and defining the boundaries of inclusion into and exclusion from the national body politic.

[132] This narrative is based on my field diary notes from 24 January 2007.

With the case of TGiE fundamentally disrupting the relationship between sovereignty, territory and statehood, my aim in this chapter is to explore and ultimately disrupt this binary through an examination of the construction and negotiation of the legal and political identities of exile Tibetans in India. For, as Kunchok's complex and contradictory legal status illustrates, Tibetan exiles face a paradoxical situation of being simultaneously 'Tibetan citizens' in the eyes of TGiE, 'refugees' in the eyes of many within the international community and 'foreign guests' in the eyes of the Indian state. Turning a critical spotlight onto this legal limbo, this chapter will pick through these contradictory relationships between Tibetans in India and each of the two 'states' – one 'theirs' but unrecognised, the other their long-term 'host' – which identify, label and document them. In thus directly addressing and theoretically dismantling the binary of refugee and citizen, this chapter will bring into dialogue literatures and disciplines which rarely interact: those of refugeehood and citizenship, statelessness and statehood.

In seeking to understand both the institutional structures of TGiE through its construction of identity politics, and the agency of individual Tibetans who daily negotiate their legal and political identities in exile, a particular route has been chosen through this binary of refugeehood and citizenship. My focus is not on the formation and meaning of identities per se. Not only have cultural, religious and nationalist aspects of Tibetan identity been explored in detail in existing research (Kolås 1996; Anand 2000; Yeh 2007) but, following Brubaker and Cooper (2000), the term 'identity' is increasingly torn between essentialist connotations and constructivist qualifiers. Rather, my focus is on the regimes, discourses and practices of 'identification' (see Scott 1998; Caplan and Torpey 2001). In addition to lacking the reifying connotations of 'identity', the processual term 'identification' focuses attention on the agents which do the identifying, the most important of which is the state. Following Foucault and Bourdieu, 'the state monopolises, or seeks to monopolise, not only legitimate physical force but also legitimate symbolic force... [which] includes the power to name, to identify, to categorise, to state what is what and who is who' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 15). Such systems of identification and categorisation are, as explored in the previous chapter, central to the articulation of governmentality.

With regards to exploring and analysing the identification regimes employed by GoI and TGiE I propose two complementary strategies which correlate with the broader epistemological and methodological approaches taken in this study. The

first is to examine the legal discourses through which the identities of 'refugee' and 'citizen' are constructed and institutionalised. The significance of these discursive practices will be explored through the idea of the politics and power of labelling (Moncrieffe and Eyben 2007). Secondly, drawing on sociological and historical literature which focuses on processes of identification in a literal sense, the role of TGiE and GoI in identity construction and the relationship between individual Tibetans and these administrations will be examined through the effective and affective attributes of the identity documents issued by these authorities. For centuries, written documents have been key 'technologies of power' (Gordillo 2006: 163. See Foucault 1979; Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Anderson 1991; Scott 1998) and, with the 'identification revolution' following World War I, states have increasingly used the documentation of individuals within their territory as a mechanism of constructing themselves *as* nation-states (Torpey 2000). Therefore, as objects which form a key interface between the state and the individual, identity documents such as passports, residency permits and voting cards control individuals' legal rights, their access to resources and their movement. Moreover, identity documents have an inherent duality whereby they can lead to both entitlement and deprivation, security and insecurity, empowerment and control (Caplan and Torpey 2001). As explored in this chapter, a focus on identity documents can provide a valuable tool for dismantling the binary of citizen and refugee and opens up a conceptual space for exploring the interaction of essentialised identity construction from above and fluid self-identification practices from below.

Attention on identity documents has, to date, focused on the Western history of identity papers (Torpey 2000), transnational elite (Sparke 2006), borderlands and border crossings (Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007), the development of biometrics and digital technologies (Lyon 2001) and opposition to governmental enumeration (Watner and McElroy 2004). Whilst offering an important insight into state practices and border management, there are notable lacunae within this literature. There is little work which takes an ethnographic approach to understanding what papers signify to their holders (Das (2004), Gordillo (2006) and Bakewell (2007) are notable exceptions) and the focus of most existing research 'is on industrialised states, where the use of papers is the most highly developed, rather than those regions of the world where the formal policies of states rarely match the realities of practice' (Bakewell 2007: 2). In focusing on the relationship between individuals, the identity papers that they hold and the state-relations that these papers create, facilitate and preclude, this chapter is therefore an attempt to shift attention to the

global South, to refugees and to an unrecognised polity. In turn, by focusing on the materiality of these identity papers and the social relations that produce them – such as processes of renewal and validation, what they enable the holder to access and do and what obligations come with their possession – an understanding of the contradictions, insecurities and allegiances that individual Tibetans face will unfold. Not only does this facilitate an exploration of national loyalty in exile and the legitimacy of TGiE, but it opens up important territorial issues facing this community and government in exile such as residency, mobility, border-crossings and transnational practices. Moreover, if identity papers are to be seen as the point at which the state passes into material form, then the question of how this happens when the state in question is unrecognised and lacks sovereignty over territory becomes salient and revealing.

In establishing and then deconstructing a series of binaries – refugee/citizen, statelessness/statehood, structure/agency, political/legal – this chapter makes three cuts at the construction of Tibetan identities in exile. The first section focuses on the identification regime of the GoI, addressing the rationale and implications of defining exile Tibetans as 'foreigners' with de facto refugee status, the Indian administration's legal distinction of different cohorts of Tibetans and the everyday practices associated with the administration of identity documents issued to exiled Tibetans by the Indian state. As such, this raises broader questions regarding the differential power of labels and categories and the gap between government policy and its enactment on the ground. Shifting attention to the relationship between Tibetans in India and TGiE, the institutionalisation of Tibetan citizenship in exile will be analysed and the rationale for and bureaucratic administration of their pseudo passport – the 'Green Book' – examined. As citizenship which is created and managed by an unrecognised and territory-less polity, this therefore opens up fascinating questions regarding the relationship between citizenship, territory and legitimacy, as well as offering a valuable insight into the relationship between TGiE and its 'citizens' in exile. In shifting perspective to look at the story from below, the final section focuses on how simultaneous identities of 'citizen' and 'refugee' are managed, negotiated and manipulated at an individual level. Further disrupting what is already a complex series of discourses and practices, this section attends to issues of agency, mobility, the fuzzy boundaries between the legal and the illegal and the political and emotional value individual Tibetans attach to these different identity documents. Overall, the chapter demonstrates the implications

for Tibetans in exile of being both 'citizens' and 'refugees' and, simultaneously, neither.

7.2 Tibetans as (de facto) refugees: the identification regimes of the Indian Government

> *At every check-post and office,*
> *I am an "Indian-Tibetan".*
> *My Registration Certificate,*
> *I renew every year, with a salaam.*
> *A foreigner born in India.*
>
> (from '*My Tibetanness,*' Tenzin Tsundue 2003: 15)

Critical scholarly attention has increasingly fixed on the elucidatory figure of the refugee as an iconic symbol of our age who represents the contemporary political identity crisis (Xenos 1996: 244. see also Arendt 1943; Agamben 1995; Soguk 1996). Central to this crisis is the 'discursive externalization of the refugee from the national (read: natural) order of things' (Malkki 1992: 33) and the construction of the refugee as a transgression of statehood and an aberration of the norm of citizenship (Soguk 1999). But how is an individual identified as a refugee? Who does this identifying and under what rationale? And what are the material and performative practices associated with this practice of identification?

As 'refugees, in the modern sense, are a creation of international law' (Hyndman 2000: xvi) it is legal discourses which conventionally construct refugee identities at an international and national level and, at first glance, defining who is and who is not a refugee appears clear-cut. According to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, a refugee is any person who;

> 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country' (Article 1 A(2)).

In light of this definition, it would appear logical that many Tibetans fleeing from persecution in their homeland are 'refugees' and, indeed, it is the identification of 'refugee' that exile Tibetans are most often associated with. The term 'refugee' is used unquestioningly in press reports (e.g. Barnett 6 October 2006; Sengupta 19 March 2008), by researchers examining the exile community (e.g. Michael 1985; Subba 1990; French 1991) and, as discussed below, most Tibetans in exile refer to themselves as 'refugees' (*kyab cholwa*). However, whilst technically one becomes a

refugee when the criteria within the 1951 Convention definition are fulfilled, recognition of refugee status is enacted at a state rather than abstract international level. As Hyndman notes, the concept of 'refugee' is defined by the 'juridical and political apparatuses of national governments, premised upon the territoriality of nations, and predicated on the political borders of individual states' (2000: 163).

Whilst some Tibetans seeking asylum in states party to the 1951 Convention meet the precise requirements of the Convention's definition (Garratt 1997), the non-signatory states of Nepal and India and the politicised situation vis-à-vis the Government of China means that the use of the label 'refugee' in this case is problematic. For example, the Nepalese Government does not recognise Tibetans as asylum seekers or refugees, the UNHCR's Kathmandu office does not interview for 'refugee status determination' (*Tibetan Review* 2001 36(1): 10) and China's objection to the term 'refugee' applied to Tibetans outside of China, 'convinced' the U.S. to grant Tibetans 'immigrant' rather than 'refugee' visas to Tibetans settling there (Yeh and Lama 2006: 813).[133] In light of such confusion, Garratt's questions: 'on what basis can Tibetans anywhere be accurately described as refugees? Are they exiles, stateless expatriates or Chinese citizens? How do they gain refugee status or asylum?' (1997: 20) frame the following discussion. Focusing on the categorisation and documentation regimes employed by the most influential state regarding this process of identification, India, the first part of this section focuses on the legal status and categorisation of Tibetans in India at the national level, and how the exile population is differentially classified by the Indian administration. Shifting scale to the local and the everyday, the second part examines how these disaggregated categories of exile Tibetans are produced on the ground, the ambiguities and contingencies of these bureaucratic practices and the insecurities for individual Tibetans that this produces.

7.2.1 National legislation, legal status and identity documents: the ambiguous position of Tibetan 'refugees' in India

In order to understand the legal position of Tibetans in India we need to step back from this specific case and consider India's relationship with refugees more generally. Though India has played host to numerous refugee communities since

[133] This was expressed most explicitly in a statement to the UN General Assembly on 27 July 1972 when the Chinese delegate Wang Jun Shen stated: 'the Office of the UNHCR has regarded as "refugees" the Tibetan inhabitants who have gone to India under the coercion of the Indian government... the Chinese delegation solemnly demands that the Office of the UNHCR must... abolish the organs for these illegal activities and delete all the related parts from the report' (cited in Oberoi 2006: 30).

its independence in 1947, there is a paradox at the heart of India's relationship with refugees. On the one hand the provision of hospitality to refugees has been posited as an integral part of Indian culture (particularly the tradition of charity and ethic that the 'guest is god') and postcolonial politics (Samaddar 2003). On the other hand, these practices of refugee care and rehabilitation are precisely that: practices. They are not underpinned by law. As a signatory neither of the 1951 Convention nor 1967 Protocol, India has no national legislation regarding refugees and is not bound by international norms.[134] Chimni (2003: 444) suggests three reasons behind India's refusal to sign the Convention and Protocol. Firstly, that these international agreements were perceived to be Eurocentric and therefore potentially threatening India's non-aligned status (Oberoi 2006). Secondly, that the regime contained in the Convention is too burdensome for developing countries like India to implement and, finally, that once India becomes a party to the Convention it would allow intrusive supervision by the UNHCR, an organisation perceived by the Indian leadership as acting on the behest of Western donor countries (Chimni 2003). However, whilst not party to the international refugee regime per se, India does nevertheless offer protection to refugees and recognise a number of refugee rights in practice through its domestic laws (Vihayakumar 2000). In addition, under customary international law codified in the Indian constitution (Article 21), the state is obliged to observe the principle of non-refoulement[135] and the Indian Judiciary has to date overwhelmingly acted to protect refugees (Rohit, 06.12.2007).

However, whilst a degree of legal protection is apparent, this is essentially a regime of charity, not a regime of rights (Samaddar 2003) and, with a lack of refugee legislation, the GoI's approach is governed by political decisions which create an unstable and ever-changing domestic policy (HRLN 2005: 4). In the words of an Indian advocate based in Delhi:

> 'our government alone determines refugee status, yet at the same time fails to define who a refugee is. The negotiation of refugee rights is informal and arbitrary as we have no obligations under international law, but there is also open space for political negotiation' (Tejal, 05.06.2007).

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[134] There have been calls within some quarters in India for national legislation on refugees on the grounds that it would facilitate distinguishing between migrants and refugees, clarify conditions in which refugee status would cease, and support India's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council (Chimni 2003). A draft 'Model National Law on Refugees' has been formulated by lawyers, academics and NGOs, but has yet to be considered by the GoI (advocate, Human Rights Law Network, Delhi 05.06.2007).

[135] The principle of non-refoulement requires that a state shall not expel or return a refugee 'in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (Article 33 paragraph (1) of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees).

As a result of the state having the power to decide who to extend hospitality to and whom to deny it to, India's treatment of refugees is therefore ad hoc and highly discriminatory. Crucially, this has led not only to the differential treatment of various refugee groups in terms of residency and employment rights and access to social services, but even to different classifications, with 'refugee' status being extended to some but not all groups. This ranges from mandate refugees who are recognised as refugees by the UNHCR and come under the organisation's remit (this includes individuals from Afghanistan, Burma, Sudan and Iraq), through groups who are recognised as de facto refugees by the GoI (including Sri Lankan Tamils and Tibetans) to those regarded not as refugees but as ordinary foreigners or economic migrants (e.g. the majority of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis resident in India).[136]

In terms of Tibetans in India, this group has, in general, enjoyed preferential treatment from the GoI. As discussed in Chapter 3, with their functioning leadership structures, adherence (at least in principle) to non-violence, and attempts to create self-sufficient communities, Tibetans are regarded as model refugees (Fürer-Haimendorf 1990). As a result, India has granted more rights and autonomy to Tibetans than most other 'refugee' groups. However, whilst the GoI recognises and often refers to Tibetans' 'refugee status', indicating the understood de facto nature of Tibetans' presence in India as refugees (Hess 2006: 82), under Indian law Tibetans are 'foreigners' and 'aliens'. Broadly speaking, Tibetans fleeing persecution in Tibet are registered under the 1939 Registration of Foreigners Act applicable to all foreigners entering the country, and are handled legally under the 1946 Foreigners Act, whereby the GoI is empowered to regulate the entry, residency and departure of aliens (TPPRC 2006b: 225). The language used in these statutory frameworks is significant, with the categories 'foreigner' and 'alien' originating, as do the Acts, in the colonial era (Banerjee 2003).

With regards to the documentation regime through which the legal status of Tibetans in India is materialised, under the 1946 Foreigners Act, Tibetans are required to obtain an 'Indian Registration Certificate for Tibetans' or 'RC' which is

[136] Alongside the absence of an official or coordinated national verification mechanism, such a confusing picture means that there are conflicting figures for the number of refugees resident in India. For example, the UNHCR cites 161,537 'refugees' in India (2008: 65), whereas the U.S Committee for Refugee and Immigrant's report (2008: 31) lists 420,400 refugees in India (including 110,000 Tibetans, 102,300 Sri Lankans, 75,000 Burmese, 50,000 Nepalese and 35,900 Bangladeshis). Meanwhile, the only mention of refugee numbers on the GoI's website is a line in 'Interesting Facts about India' which states that 'India provides safety for more than 300,000 refugees originally from Sri Lanka, Tibet, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who escaped to flee religious and political persecution' (http://india.gov.in/myindia/facts.php).

issued by the Ministry of Home through the local Superintendent of Police and needs to be renewed annually (TPPRC 2006b: 11–12). This document – a small black book – identifies the holder as a 'refugee' with 'Tibetan nationality' and permits freedom of movement in India and the right to reside in the area where it is registered. The RC is also necessary for opening bank accounts, renting accommodation and running businesses. Tibetans with a valid RC are entitled to apply for a GoI-issued 'Identity Certificate' (IC). Issued under Section 20 of the Passport Act 1967, this document, valid for 2–10 years and renewable, is for travel purposes but is not a passport. Visas can be issued on the IC and a 'no objection to return to India' (NORI) stamp is required in order to re-enter India. However, de facto refugee status and the identity documents through which this is materialised (RC and IC) applies only to those Tibetans who arrived in India between 1959 and 1979 and their children (HRLN 2007: 4). The improvement in Sino-Indian relations in the 1980s and the increasing numbers of Tibetans coming into exile following the liberalisation of Chinese policy in 1979 meant that Tibetans arriving after this period have not been recognised as 'refugees' by GoI and, although they are generally allowed to remain in India they have no legal status.

In terms of RCs, the GoI has designated three categories of Tibetans who are eligible for these documents. These are Tibetans who came to India between 1959 and 1979 (i.e. those with 'refugee status'), Tibetans born in India and designated Tibetans who have arrived in India after 2003 and who carry a 'Special Entry Permits for persons of Tibetan origin' (SEP) issued by the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu (Secretary of Department of Security, 01.05.2007).[137] Such distinctions between different cohorts of Tibetans in terms of who is bestowed with or denied the 'refugee' label thus imposes external divisions upon the exile community, creating 'new' categories which have significant material consequences. Crucially, the 'categories' of Tibetans entitled to RCs leaves a group of Tibetans – those who arrived in India between 1979 and 2003 – denied this identity document and the rights and entitlements that go with it. Ineligible for travel documents (e.g. IC), this cohort is effectively stuck in legal limbo in India where they face restrictions in movement, residency and accessing Indian services. Most newcomer interviewees

[137] The SEP was introduced on humanitarian grounds and as an attempt to monitor and regularise the increasing flow of Tibetans into India, and was welcomed by TGiE as Tibetans now have fewer problems at the Nepali-Indian border and are no longer entering India illegally (Director, Dharamsala Reception Centre, 05.04.2007). SEPs are issued for those on pilgrimage trips to India (issued for one month and RCs are not allocated on this basis), those seeking education in India (for whom a more long-term 'extension of stay' permit can be issued) and to those deemed 'vulnerable', including former political prisoners. These latter individuals, when recommended by the Bureau Office of the Dalai Lama are now (slowly) being issued with RCs (Representative, Tibet Bureau, Delhi 15.04.2006).

spoke both of considerable anxiety regarding the vulnerability of their position in India – especially in terms of encounters with Indian police – and of their desire to acquire an RC:

> 'Since 2004 I have been in India but still I have no RC. Many times I have made applications, but this process it takes a long time. Really I need the RC, because without [it] life in India is very hard.... Today if I am stopped by Indian police or officials, I get in trouble and they tell us we have to go back to Tibet. Only after paying baksheesh will they say "OK, you can go now" and for leaving Dharamsala I am also scared because any time the Indians they ask to see my papers and then what do I say?' (Gonpo, Dharamsala, 12.03.2007).
>
> 'The police come to my area and knocked on doors wanting to see RCs but I don't have RC yet so every time I have argument and every time I must pay bribes. For this I am scared' (Ugyen, Dharamsala, 31.03.2007),

Such anxieties regarding securing their legal position within the host state is common across many newly arrived refugee communities (Al-Ali *et al* 2001) and, because the RC is required for so many basic livelihood needs, this cohort is frequently in transgression of one law or another. Although TGiE has requested the GoI to issue documentation in the form of 'long stay permits' to these individuals and thereby legalise their presence in India, this process has not yet been uniformly implemented across the exile community (Secretary, Department of Security, 01.05.2007). In reality, many such Tibetans attempt to acquire an RC through bribery or by falsely claiming to be born in India, and there a flourishing birth certificate forgery industry in Dharamsala (Patail, 28 November 2002). Whilst such practices are an important example of Tibetan agency and resistance to the systems of registration imposed by the Indian state (discussed below), as an Indian advocate in Dharamsala pointed out, each time there are new fraudulent practices with RCs, so new and more stringent conditions and requirements are imposed, to the disadvantage of newcomers from Tibet (14.03.2007).

With regards to the legal rights of Tibetans in India, the ambiguity, contradictions and differential treatment continues. Whilst Tibetans do not enjoy the same political rights as Indian citizens – such as formal participation in Indian politics or the ability to carry a Indian passport – under the 1946 Foreigners Act they are entitled to the rights applicable to all non-citizen aliens residing in India as enshrined in the Indian Constitution. These include freedom to work and move around the country, access to Indian health and education facilities (see Chapter 6), the right to equality (Article 14), the right to life and personal liberty (Article

21) and the freedom to practice and propagate their own religion (Article 25). However, despite such formal rights, many Tibetans I spoke to were under the impression that they have few entitlements in India:

> 'In India we Tibetans aren't safe. We don't have legal status here and we don't have full rights so we can't vote, we can't get some jobs or have property and the police they don't protect us. We're treated as second-rate and... and looked down on' (Dhargyal, Majnu-ka-Tilla, 07.06.2007).

> 'Here, without citizenship we have no rights. We can't buy land, can't own property, can't get a good job, so what is our future? And if I have a problem with one Indian then I can say nothing – my hands are tied. Always they will come done on the side of the Indian. People, they say we Tibetans are doing well here, we are educated and making money, but really we have no rights' (Nyendak, Dharamsala, 24.03.2007).

Moreover, whilst Tibetans may be technically 'foreigners' in India, the varying (mis)interpretations of this status can create problems. For example:

> 'with bank accounts you have to be stating your nationality. Of course we put "Tibetan" but many banks they don't know if we are allowed to have accounts.... They think we are real foreigners but we say we are born in India. We always have such problems.... So the banks, they want identity proof so we give RC, but some banks they don't accept it and ask for passports, but of course we don't have one, but they can't understand this!' (Topgyal, South Delhi, 30.10.2007).

Similar confusion arises regarding gaining admission to institutions of higher education:

> 'Universities in India, they have seats for foreigner and then general category Indians and then STs [Scheduled Tribes] and SCs [Scheduled Castes]. They say we aren't foreigners because we are born here, but also we can't sit for "general category"... and for the local [state-level] colleges for admission you need one "Domicile Certificate" [which confirms that the student's parents are legal residents of the state] but for us that is impossible' (Norzom, Lugsum-Samdupling, 25.11.2007).[138]

7.2.2 The messiness of bureaucratic practices and unstable identity documents

Attending to this disjuncture between the presuppositions of the legal rights of Tibetans in India as set out in statutory frameworks and their enactment on the ground opens an important window onto the (mis)translation of central state policy into local state practice. For, whilst there is confusion regarding the status and documentation of Tibetans at a national level, this is amplified by the capricious

[138] At a national level, the GoI 'reserves seats for Tibetans in Indian institutions for the following fields of study: engineering (3 seats), medicine (1), pharmacy (1) and printing technology (2)' (Planning Council 1994, Section 5.2.4).

practices and arbitrary pronouncements of Indian officials at a local level. As an Indian advocate working in Dharamsala put it:

> 'Our law treats Tibetans and Indians equally because it makes no distinction between citizens and foreigners. But the reality is... the reality is different. You will find a lot of prejudice against Tibetans at the local level, so with local police they often pick on Tibetans, asking for papers and sometimes they are aggressive' (Kaushik, 14.03.2007).

Therefore, whilst national legislation differentiates this exile population regarding their legal status within India, as I demonstrate in this section, the bureaucratic 'messiness' surrounding the administration of identity documents means that each of these disaggregated categories is contingent and unstable. Indeed, it is the everyday processes and practices associated with the identity documents issued by GoI which forms one of the primary points of contact that exile Tibetans have with the Indian state. By following the argument that the meaning of 'the state' lies as much in its details and everyday practices as in its ideologies and grand projects (see Gupta 1995; Shore and Wright 1997), I therefore want to turn to the micro-political and micro-administrative practices associated with RCs and ICs: the issuing, terminating, validating, recording, stamping, signing and filing of these documents and the information that they hold.

The most regular encounter between exile Tibetans and the Indian state regarding their identity documents is the annual renewal of the RC. Whilst the RC is usually renewed without difficulty, it is done entirely at the discretion of local officials and many interviewees described this as an onerous and stressful experience. As a hotel receptionist in Majnuka Tilla put it:

> 'I sometimes take my relatives to FRO office [Foreigners Registration Office]. Some days they will give papers OK but then other days they will refuse and say they are going to terminate RC, and then they demand baksheesh [bribe]. I'm tired of this Indian way of doing things' (Tsewang, 15.04.2006).

In addition, although Tibetans are required to register their departure and arrival in different regions with the respective local authorities – a mechanism through which GoI attempts to monitor the Tibetan population – each individual must renew their RC in person in the FRO where it was issued. This causes significant hassle for those studying or working in different areas, and I spoke to several Tibetans who have to make the round trip from their monastery in Karnataka to Dharamsala during their exam period every year.

Considering the bureaucratic systems behind these identity documents more generally, several TGiE officials spoke of their frustrations dealing with the whims of individual administrators and the length of time that procedures took:

> 'So much time and hassle we spend with this Indian bureaucracy. So, for example, it takes two days just to get a stamp or a signature on one document.... This for us is hard to work with every day – for me I think I will never get used to it' (Indo Tibetan Co-ordinator, Dharamsala Welfare Office, 10.03.2006).

> 'Many times we have problems with local officials changing and interpreting the central government notices in different ways. Even if all the documents they are perfect they will cause hassle – they say come back tomorrow, they need more information, more certificates and so on – this is where we have problems.... Tibetan people they are impatient, they are not used to bureaucracy and don't want to wait. So they will pay bribes to get documents, but this causes problems for [the] whole community' (RC Officer, Department of Security, 01.05.2007).

Several interviewees also spoke of problems with mis-spellings of Tibetan names on forms and documents:

> 'I applied for IC but when it came there was [a] spelling mistake with my name and for more than one year I have been trying to make this change but still it is not finished. The SP [Superintendent of Police] he changed one year back so the process I had to start over again' (Wangchuk, Dharamsala, 16.04.2007).

However, as an Indian advocate pointed out, the blame does not always lie with Indian officials:

> 'If there are mistakes on the RC, even small ones, then an IC cannot be made and this... it causes huge problems. So I had one case where a girl had made her RC using official documents from TCV school but this document had mistakenly said that her father was "late" when in fact he was alive and so her RC was printed wrong and when she went to get IC they wouldn't make it because of this mistake – you see there was no death certificate for father! – and it took us so long to change RC because [we] had to prove that the father was alive. So, as I say, one mistake it can cause so many problems' (Kaushik, 14.03.2007).

In addition, a notable feature which emerged from interviews in different settlements was the geographical unevenness of the administration of RCs. Far from a uniform, standardised system rolled out across the state, RCs were frequently described as easier to acquire and renew within the large agricultural settlements in Karnataka compared to Delhi, Dharamsala or the settlements around Dehradun where these documents are more likely to be spot-checked.

Highlighting the agency of state officials in terms of who can request, issue, renew or retain an identity document, this procedure again reinforces the assertion that the state is not a monolithic entity but rather a series of individuals who wield different degrees of power. Moreover, such 'ID checks' cause considerable anxiety, not only for newcomers without RCs or a knowledge of Hindi (see above), but also those possessing the required documents, as a magazine editor in Dharamsala recounted:

> 'Often we Tibetans have so many problems with the Indian police here. Like one time I was working in the office too late, and then I was walking home maybe 10.30pm and one group of police they stopped me and said "Tonight is curfew, you are not allowed outside". But then I said I didn't know – there are no notices, announcements, but sorry and I will go home. But then they say "Where is your RC? Show me your RC". But I say my RC is at home where it is safe with all my other documents and if he [police officer] wants, he can come to my home and I will show him, but they say no, you must carry your RC [at] all times. So he took me to police station even though it was late at night I was taken there and put in with the Indian criminals. So this is how they treat us Tibetans and really we can do nothing because we have no power. With only our RC we have no rights' (Nyidon, 03.11.2007).

The police also play an important role in the issuing and administration of ICs. Although the document itself is time-consuming but straightforward to apply for (involving close coordination between GoI and TGiE as discussed below), it is the issuing of the NORI stamp which can prove problematic as clearance must be sought from the Ministry of External Affairs confirming that the applicant does not have a criminal record. This 'inquiry' requires a home visit by the police, and not only is the process delayed if the individual is not present when the police call, but bribes are frequently demanded (Secretary, Majnuka Tilla Welfare Office, 16.04.2006) and many interviewees described the experience as intrusive and distressing.

7.2.3 Summary

The ethnographic approach to the state adopted in this study reveals how the identification of individual Tibetans by the Indian state is put into practice on the ground and is in many ways arbitrary, spatially uneven and contingent upon the whims of local officials. Illustrating the importance of documents for establishing distinctions between identities, such an approach demonstrates how these boundaries are constantly negotiated rather than necessarily based a set of 'known facts' about an individual. In turn, this supports Caplan and Torpey's assertion that 'the documentary apparatus of identification itself has driven the history of categories and collectivities' (2001: 3). Turning to the label 'refugee' as a

classificatory device employed by the state, this case appears to both confirm and challenge two conflicting perspectives. On the one hand, the fact that the GoI's ability to sanction or deny the 'refugee' label has such significant material implications for individual Tibetans in terms of determining their mobility, residency and entitlement to rights in India affirms Zetter's assertion that:

> "'Refugee" constitutes one of the most powerful labels currently in the repertoire of humanitarian concern, national and international public policy and social differentiation. The label "refugee" both stereotypes and institutionalises a status' (1988: 1).

On the other hand, the arbitrariness of Tibetan 'refugee' status in India and the fact that individuals can fall into and then fall out of the refugee label (Hayden 2006) also supports claims that the category of 'refugee' is vague, fragmented and dynamic and as much a political as legal classification (Malkii 1995; Black 2001). Finally, returning to the refugee-citizen binary, a logical assumption is that the insecurity and marginalities of the identity of 'refugee' is countered by the citizen whose identity is stable and unproblematic. However, this case fundamentally challenges such a distinction. Not only has the concept of the universal rights-bearing *Indian* citizen been fundamentally challenged (see Chatterjee 2004), but, as I will explore in the next section, Tibetans in exile have an added dimension of complexity in that whatever status they have in India, they are simultaneously 'Tibetan citizens.'

7.3 Tibetans as citizens: the identification regimes of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

> *'Modern citizenship is closely connected to the rise of the state. Conventional views of statehood see control over membership in its territory as a crucial requirement... Today, only states have the authority under international law to grant or deny the status of citizen. Thus, citizenship is strongly linked to the idea of political community which in turn is seen as synonymous with the territorial exclusivity of the sovereign nation-state'*
>
> (Agnew 1999: 514).

Given that exile Tibetans attain refugee status to varying degrees and are uniformly stateless, a logical assumption is that their unrecognised and territory-less administration has no role in generating political identities for this community. However, alongside the identification regimes of the host state which classify most exile Tibetans in India as de facto refugees, is a parallel identification regime run by TGiE which regards and labels all exile Tibetans as citizens. In

turning to the latter, this section attends to the discursive and material construction of Tibetan citizenship in exile and, through this, turns a critical spotlight onto the relationship between Tibetans in exile and the TGiE.

My concern with citizenship here is a limited and specific one. Rather than the content of citizenship, it is the category of 'citizen' that I am interested in and, in light of this, I want to briefly set out two broad approaches. First, is citizenship as a purely legal status with the citizen defined as 'a member of a particular territorial state and the rights attaching to that status' (Axford 2002: 37). As such, the concept of the citizen is the key mechanism through which the state is conjoined with the nation (Agnew 1999: 514) and is thus central to the organisation of the modern Western state and the development of centralised political control (Scott 1998). However, this traditional juridico-legal model of citizenship contained within a territorial nation-state is increasingly under strain from a number of forces including immigration (Castles and Davidson 2000), the development of global conventions governing human rights (Agnew 1999) and 'supra-state' forms of political community such as the EU (Mandaville 1999). In light of such challenges to the relationship between citizenship, the state and national territory, there has been a shift of academic attention from citizenship as a legal formula, to citizenship as a social and cultural construct which exists beyond territorial borders and at scales other than the nation-state (Painter and Philo 1995). In considering this re-scaling of the 'practices and privileges of citizen identity' (Kurtz and Hankins 2005: 4), alternative models of citizenship have included urban citizenship (Secor 2004), transnational citizenship (Bauböck 1994), cosmopolitan citizenship (Linklater 2002) and global citizenship (Dower and Williams 2002). As a stateless community coming under a territory-less polity, citizenship instituted by TGiE clearly intersects with these reconceptualisations. At first glance, as such, this section seeks to trace the legal discourses through which exile Tibetan citizenship is constructed and the identity documents through which this is materialised in order to examine both what Tibetan citizenship in exile can tells us about the state-like functions and aspirations of TGiE, and what this case can contribute to debates regarding the relationship between citizenship, statehood and territory more generally.

7.3.1 The establishment of Tibetan citizenship in exile

Tibet, as it was governed under the Dalai Lamas prior to 1959, had neither a single homogenous category of the citizen, nor the conferment of homogenous rights

across the Tibetan population (Frechette 2006). Rather, the relationship between the Tibetan state and its inhabitants was contingent on an individual's landholdings and position within socio-economic hierarchies. The exile Tibetan government, however, has developed a formalised notion of Tibetan citizenship, the definitions, criteria, rights and duties of which are enshrined in the Draft Constitution of 1963 and the Charter of Tibetans in Exile (1991). Outlined in the latter, Tibetan citizenship is granted to:

> 'All Tibetans born within the territory of Tibet and those born in other countries shall be eligible to be citizens of Tibet. Any person whose biological mother or biological father is of Tibetan descent has the right to become a citizen of Tibet' (Article 8).

The rights of such 'Tibetan citizens' include equality before the law (Article 9), religious freedom (Article 10), freedom to life, liberty and property, freedom of speech and expression and freedom of movement and association (Article 12). Under Article 13 of the Charter, 'all Tibetan citizens shall fulfil the following obligations:

> (a) bear true allegiance to Tibet;
> (b) faithfully comply and observe the Charter and the laws enshrined therein;
> (c) endeavour to achieve the common goal of Tibet;
> (d) pay taxes imposed in accordance with the laws;
> (e) perform such obligations as may be imposed by law in the event of a threat to the interest of Tibet'.

At first glance, these 'statutes' of Tibetan citizenship appear to be framed in familiarly Western terms and to represent a conventional shift in a state's relationship with its population from one based around subjects and duties to one grounded in citizenship and the language of rights and social responsibilities (Miller and Rose 1990). Indeed, the institutionalisation of Tibetan citizenship can be seen as a key part of the broader exilic nation-building project and TGiE's efforts to seek acceptance and legitimacy from the international community (see Chapters 6 and 8 for similar strategies regarding discourses of democracy and good governance).

However, exile Tibetans have encountered significant cultural challenges and limitations in their efforts to accommodate such a modern Western model of citizenship (Frechette 2006). Illustrative of this are the difficulties faced in translating and interpreting the concept of 'the citizen' into both Tibetan language

and Tibetan cultural and political contexts (see Sidaway *et al* 2004).[139] Crucially, elements of traditional Tibetan hierarchies of subjecthood remain, and there are at least three translations of the concept of the citizen in use in the Tibetan diaspora: *nga-wang* used in the 1963 Draft Constitution which connotes the idea of a 'subject'; *yul-mi* used in the 1991 Charter and meaning 'local inhabitant'; and *mi-ser* which is often used in everyday parlance to mean citizen, though it 'translates as "agricultural tenant" or "serf", and which was used for all non-aristocrats in Tibet under the Dalai Lamas' (Frechette 2006: 137). Such confusion over the meaning and significance of citizenship was apparent in my interviews, with a general lack of knowledge as to its establishment or engagement with the concept beyond general associations with Tibetan nationalism (discussed below). As such, this highlights the ongoing struggle within the Tibetan diaspora to 'develop a political ideology that reflects both their achievements in constructing a modern state and their own culture and tradition' (*ibid*: 138). More generally, the exile Tibetan (mis)interpretations of Western ideas of citizenship illustrate both the importance of studying citizenship trajectories and experiences outside of Anglo-American and European perspectives (Ho 2008), and the need for our interpretations of the practices and understandings of citizenship to be contextually grounded (Brubaker 1989).

On the one hand, therefore, the discourse of citizenship is, like the exile system of justice commissions (see Chapter 5) and the concept of democracy (see Chapter 8), understandably poorly developed given how recently the concept was adopted by the community and the legal restrictions faced by the situation of exile. However, on the other hand, the material manifestations and practical implications of Tibetan citizenship are widely understood and engaged with. Tibetan citizenship is materialised in the *Rangzen Lagteb* or 'Green Book' which Tibetans refer to as a pseudo passport, and the annual payment of *chatrel* to TGiE (see Chapter 6).[140] Alongside the establishment of citizenship in exile, the Green Book and *chatrel* were instituted outside the homeland. Indeed, no universal identity document existed in pre-1959 Tibet and Tibetan passports were only introduced in 1947 and issued by the *Kashag* to just four Tibetan diplomats.[141]

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[139] Whilst acknowledging the fundamental difficulties associated with translating political nomenclature, terminology and language in this case, given that 'citizen' and 'citizenship' are the main terms used in TGiE documentation, these terms are employed throughout this study.

[140] Given that my interviewees referred to this document more frequently as their 'Green Book' than *Rangzen Lagteb*, including often in Tibetan, the former is used in this chapter.

[141] The first and only surviving Tibetan passport, issued to Tibet's Secretary of Finance Tsepon Shakabpa between 1930 and 1950, went missing in Kathmandu in 1992. After investigations and a fundraising appeal

As noted in the previous chapter, the Green Book and *chatrel* system were started by a group of exile Tibetans in 1972 under the auspices of the 'Tibetan Freedom Movement' with the dual rationale of encouraging Tibetans to make a financial contribution to the running of their government and, through such a contribution, thereby expressing their loyalty to TGiE. In 1991, the holding of a Green Book and contribution of *chatrel* became enshrined in the Charter of Tibetans in Exile (Article 13) as one of the main duties of Tibetan citizens in exile and, in 2004, the Department of Finance became the singular authority to issue Green Books (*Kalon*, Departments of Finance and DIIR, 10.04.2006). As such, the Green Book and *chatrel* have shifted from their origins within Tibetan 'civil society' to being managed and administered by the TGiE. More than 90% of exile Tibetans hold a Green Book and these documents are issued to all Tibetan children born in exile and to each new arrival from Tibet (Additional Secretary, Department of Finance, 02.05.2007).

7.3.2 Constructing identities and legitimising 'state'hood: Tibetan citizenship and the Green Book

Given TGiE's unrecognised status and lack of law-making abilities, it is easy to dismiss Tibetan Citizenship and the Green Book as merely symbolic. The exile government cannot legally defend or protect its own citizens nor, given its lack of jurisdiction over territory, guarantee them basic rights of abode and the rights and obligations of Tibetan citizenship are not legally enforceable. In addition, no Tibetan can travel on a Green Book as it is not recognised by any state, and *chatrel* is deemed 'voluntary' due to TGiE's its operation within India. However, despite these seemingly insurmountable legal challenges, exile Tibetan citizenship does have a number of parallels with conventional state citizenship. Not only did my interviewees consistently speak of the Green Book as their 'Tibetan passport' and their duty to pay 'taxes' to their government, but TGiE exercises significant moral and social coercion regarding the implementation of Tibetan citizenship and the identification regime which the exile government has established receives a considerable degree of international acknowledgement and recognition.

Firstly, the Green Book acts as both a unifying and exclusionary marker of Tibetan identity as, though TGiE cannot control residence in nor prohibition from any

amongst the exile community it was recovered from an antiques dealer in Nepal in 2004 and showcased in an exhibition on Tibetan nationalism organised by Friends of Tibet, India (Sunita, 10.04.2007). Bearing visa stamps of India, UK, USA, Italy and France, the passport is regarded by exile Tibetans as affirmation of Tibet's independent statehood and, as such, is considered a national treasure (Mehrotra 2000).

territory (Caplan and Torpey 2001: 10; see Chapter 5), the exile government can determine and regulate membership of its exile community. On the one hand, the Green Book and Tibetan citizenship it signifies are exclusionary mechanisms. As well as excluding 'obvious' non-Tibetans, eligibility for Tibetan citizenship and the Green Book differentiates between Tibetans living in India and Nepal and 'border people:' ethnically similar groups such as Ladakhis, Bhutias, and Sherpas who are Indian or Nepali citizens. These communities follow Tibetan Buddhism and are eligible to join Tibetan monasteries, nunneries and schools but, under the criteria for Tibetan citizenship, are not entitled to hold a Green Book and so are excluded from the benefits of such a status (including jobs in TGiE, voting in Tibetan elections and Tibetan scholarships and welfare stipends). Such construction of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion based on 'citizenship' therefore sets TGiE apart from most diasporas and transnational groups.

On the other hand, in theory, every Tibetan citizen as defined in the 1991 Charter is eligible for a Green Book. In practice, however, it is only those in exile who are able to enact the obligations and enjoy the rights of this citizenship, although the Secretary at DIIR was keen to stress that the TGiE did occasionally receive *chatrel* contributions from Tibetans inside Tibet which, he argued, was 'a very praiseworthy thing, that these Tibetans should demonstrate their solidarity with His Holiness and the Tibetans in exile' (10.04.2006). Within exile, in stark contrast to refugee status and RCs, Tibetan citizenship and the Green Book are universal and standard identifications and documents which are accessible to all exile Tibetans, including newcomer refugees. As a monk who came into exile in 2001 explained to me, 'for the RC I am still having problems, but the Green Book was easy. For this, all you need is to be Tibetan! [smiles and points to his maroon robes]' (Sherab, 02.05.2007). Indeed, the case of recent refugees is revealing. When they arrive in India these individuals, arguably 'more Tibetan' than many second generation Tibetans in exile (Yeh 2007), need to 'become' Tibetan citizens before they can start to meaningfully engage with the exile community. These refugees may have entered the territory of and sought asylum in India, but they are also required to seek membership of the Tibetan 'state' in exile and to become 'bona fide' Tibetan citizens and nationals.

Crucially, this creation of 'universal' Tibetan citizenship in exile should be seen as the statist and pseudo-legal aspect of a broader project of nation-building and national identity construction in exile. Indeed, the 'nationalisation of citizenship'

(Isin and Turner 2007: 11) in this case means that the *legal* identity regime of Tibetan citizenship has become synonymous with the *political* identity regime of Tibetan nationality. Moreover, just as Tibetan citizenship was institutionalised in exile, so is it broadly acknowledged that Tibetan nationalism was created through the process of Chinese occupation (Shakya 1999) and solidified by Tibetans' 'sudden immersion into the midst of a sea of Indians' (Goldstein 1975: 21. See Chapter 6). A central element of this discursive construction of Tibetan nationalism has been TGiE's fostering of a single Tibetan identity. Universal Tibetan citizenship has been a key way of subsuming previously dominant regional and sectarian affiliations (Norbu 1992) and thus forging a sense of national unity across the diaspora. As such, this resonates with Corrigan and Sayer's analysis of state activities 'regulating into silence identification based on difference and promoting integrative categories of official discourse – the citizen, the voter, the taxpayer, the consumer' (1985: 198).

Moreover, correlating with much work in anthropology on the essentialisation of national identities by state elites (e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Gupta and Ferguson 1992), it is clearly the Dalai Lama and political leadership within the TGiE who are instigating, maintaining and managing this reification of Tibetan identity in exile:

> 'We are struggling to create Tibet outside Tibet... and for this our exile government provides guidance – it plays key roles in making Tibetan identity strong with promotion of culture, language and Tibetan way of life.... The government and its schools and institutions keep the Tibetans as Tibetans' (Former *Kalon*, Department of Education, 02.12.2006).

In light of such assertions, the promotion of nationalism can be seen as a key legitimising strategy employed by TGiE which firmly places this institution at the centre of the exile community. Such a resurgence of nationalism and promotion of an essentialised Tibetan identity also marks an important point of departure from post-structuralist approaches which problematise the notion of monolithic national and ethnic identities, and instead suggest understanding identities as categories of practice that are fragmented, multiple and hybrid (Appadurai 1996; Clifford 1997). Indeed, not only does the exile Tibetan government and community's 'compelling *affirmations* of essential subjectivity, genuine national desire, and demonstrable ethnic integrity... seem to fly in the face of narratives of fragmented and contingent identity' (Venturino 1997: 99, 100), but such strategies lend weight to claims that 'diasporas can also reproduce the essentialized notions of place and

identity that they are supposed to transgress' (Carter 2005: 54; Mitchell 1997b). As Lavie and Swedenberg assert, 'hybridity does not appear to be a viable strategy in the... case of an exiled identity demanding to return to its historic territory' (1996: 12). Significantly, however, this is not a return to realist essentialism, but a conscious strategy of exilic governance. Recognising that 'identities can be important political resources' (Pratt 2000: 368), the TGiE's strategic essentialisation (Spivak 1988) of Tibetan identity in exile can therefore be seen as central to its raison d'être.

Underpinning this mutually reinforcing relationship between TGiE and the construction of Tibetan identity is the fact that the Green Book and payment of *chatrel* are key signifiers of authenticity and legitimacy through which the TGiE and Tibetans in exile reaffirm each other's status. The holding of a Green Book and contributing *chatrel* are the primary mechanisms by which exile Tibetans recognise TGiE as their legitimate government, thereby solidifying the link between the diaspora and the exile administration rather than other organisations or institutions. Meanwhile, TGiE claims that 'from the legal point of view those who contribute towards *chatrel* and hold a Green Book are recognised as bona fide Tibetans in exile' (Department of Finance 2005: 2).[142] In this sense, the Green Book does appear to function as a passport in some respects in that it is the material manifestation of Tibetan citizenship, it represents the contours of state-citizen relations between TGiE and its diaspora and is a crucial technique for nationalising these 'citizens' (Ong 1999). Moreover, the establishment of a social contract between exile Tibetans and TGiE through the rights and obligations of Tibetan citizenship in effect creates state-like political subjects. Whilst lacking legal standing and in many regards symbolic, these rights and responsibilities that accompany membership of this community take on a heightened importance in this case given the denial of many rights to Tibetans within Tibet (TCHRD 2008) and their legally ambiguous status within India. As such, the creation of citizenship and its attendant privileges and rights provides a degree of security for the exile community.

In addition, following the assertion that citizenship is 'an assemblage of techniques and technologies aimed at producing governable subjects' (Sidhu and Christie 2007:

[142] Questioned on the equivalence of a 'bona fide Tibetan' and Tibetan citizenship, the Additional Secretary at the Department of Finance stressed that, whilst any Tibetan without a Green Book was of course a 'Tibetan' in an ethnic sense, the TGiE does not 'legally' recognise them as Tibetan 'citizens' (02.05.2007).

15), it is the privileges and responsibilities intrinsic within Tibetan citizenship which means that the Green Book system is a key mechanism through which TGiE attempts to manage its exile population. As noted in the previous chapter, whilst lacking legal underpinnings, TGiE does exert moral and social coercion through the Green Book and *chatrel* systems, with the holding of this document and payment of this 'tax' being essential to functioning in the exiled community. This includes gaining admission to Tibetan schools, accessing TGiE-run welfare services, being eligible for scholarships, stipends and TGiE jobs and voting in exile Tibetan elections. This is therefore a key mechanism through which the exile government attempts to gain loyalty, as individuals failing to pay *chatrel* face discrimination and a general renegade status in the Tibetan community (Norgay, Dekyiling 17.04.2007). Moreover, the confiscation of a Tibetan's Green Book – and thereby loss of Tibetan citizenship and the rights and entitlements that go with it – is the only punishment that the exile Tibetan judiciary can impose on members of the community.

This population management function of the Green Book also has important spatial dimensions. On the one hand, an expansive and increasingly state-like bureaucratic administration has been established to issue and renew Green Books and collect *chatrel* payments. This includes branches of the Tibetan Freedom Movement in each settlement in India and Nepal and Offices of Tibet in states outside South Asia. These networks come under the jurisdiction of the TPiE, while the Department of Finance keeps detailed records of all Green Books and *chatrel* payments (*Kalon*, Departments of Finance and DIIR, 10.04.2006). In light of Caplan and Torpey's argument that 'systems of standardised registration have contributed in large part to the character of the modern bureaucratic state' (2001: 1) and Scott's (1998: 71) assertion that systems of documenting individuals' identity are based on mechanisms of legibility which extend the reach of state surveillance, this increasingly standardised administration of Green Books and *chatrel* can be seen as a key performance of statehood. However, on the other hand, like access to and dependence on TGiE-run welfare services (see Chapter 6), the benefits and duties of Tibetan citizenship are more relevant in the exile settlements than in scattered communities and the diaspora in the West. To this extent, whilst not territorially bounded as in conventional nation-states, Tibetan citizenship is to a degree territorially concentrated and certainly geographically uneven.

Finally, it is important to note that the Green Book as a signifier of 'authentic' Tibetan identity is not restricted to discourses and practices internal to the exile community. Rather, TGiE's identification regime is increasingly acknowledged and tacitly recognised by significant external actors, albeit in starkly different ways. With regards to China, given that the Chinese Government publically declares TGiE to be a 'splittist' organisation (Wei 1989), Tibetans may be persecuted by the Chinese authorities if they were to return to Tibet and found to be carrying the most official document issued by the TGiE: the Green Book (Home Office 2003: Section 6.304). Equally revealing, if from a somewhat different geopolitical framework, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada declares that 'one of the best ways to determine if a person is a bona fide Tibetan in exile is to see if they have a "Green Book"... the authenticity [of which] can be verified by the Office of Tibet that issued the document' (10 November 1998, CHN30745.E). Such acknowledgement of an 'official' Tibetan identity in exile – albeit not recognition of Tibetan citizenship per se – therefore challenges assumptions that stateless individuals and peoples are '"invisible" because they do not conform to the modern political imaginary' (Mandaville 1999: 663). Rather, the validation of Tibetan identity by the TGiE and through the Green Book can be read as an important attempt to create an international political (if not legal) presence for this community.

It is in India that the TGiE's ability to determine and verify Tibetan identity is most evident. Indeed, it is through interactions between the Indian and Tibetan administrations regarding the administration of their Indian-issued identity documents that TGiE's identification regime is given most credence. Crucially, the Indian Government relies upon the TGiE both to verify an individual Tibetan's identity and to assist in the administrative processing of both RCs and ICs at a range of bureaucratic levels. For example, in order to apply for an RC a copy of the applicant's Green Book must be submitted as proof that the applicant is a 'bona fide Tibetan' along with letters of recommendation from the applicant's local Settlement Office and the *Kashag* (Secretary, Majnuka Tilla Welfare Office, 16.04.2006). With regards to the issuing of ICs, through interviews with a number of Tibetan officials I pieced together an involved series of exchanges between TGiE and GoI. The applicant first approaches their Settlement Officer or head of Tibetan school or monastery for a letter of recommendation and proof of residency. This, along with a letter of invitation from a host in the destination country and copies of

the applicant's Green Book and RC are sent to the TGiE's Department of Security. Then, as the Department's data manager explained:

> 'I receive all the IC forms and I register them all in a book. These days we need a photograph for each person so my job is also to write to the Settlement Officers if there is no photo, and then to log all the documents.... every year we have to make one annual report of all RC and IC applications for the and this is read out in the parliament. From here I send everything to the *Kashag* and there, if they approve [it] they issue a support letter and send everything to the Delhi Bureau' (11.03.2007)

The Representative at the Tibetan Bureau in New Delhi then picks up the paper trail:

> 'when the IC applications they arrive here, our staff they log them and then we send them to the Ministry of External Affairs.... After the MEA has conducted the checks of the applicant and if there is approval from [the] Indian side then the IC it comes back to this office and from here we send it direct to the individual' (15.04.2006).

The TGiE's role does not finish with the issuing of the IC however. The Secretary at the Chief Representative Office in Bangalore explained how:

> 'sometimes in this office we get calls from the immigration counter at Bangalore or Mumbai airport. They have a Tibetan with IC and they want to make sure the person and the IC are real and there are no problems so we... they want additional recommendation letter from this office. A letter to say this person has this IC and this IC is genuine. This really helps people because there are [a] few cases when some individuals might misuse [the system] and this affects the whole community. We thoroughly scrutinise each case before we write and stamp the letter. We contact settlements, we get a copy of RC, check other documents. We are very thorough, making many inquiries for each case' (29.11.2007).

As such, TGiE in effect takes on a watchdog role, with the Indian administration relying on TGiE's literal and metaphorical 'stamp' of approval to verify a Tibetan's identity before RCs or travel documents will be issued. Whilst not an endorsement of TGiE as a government per se, nor indeed legal recognition of Tibetan citizenship, this reliance on the exile administration does indicate that the GoI has a significant degree of trust in TGiE, viewing it as a partner in particular security issues and the ultimate guarantor for its exiled population. In light of this, TGiE's involvement in the IC system can be read as giving a degree of legal meaning and legitimacy to this polity.

However, it is important not to overstate the case as there was also frustration and criticism from some within the community – notably newcomers – that the exile

government is not doing more to facilitate their acquisition of Indian identity documents. As an NGO official who works with newcomer refugees asserted:

> 'Our government should really do a lot more to help newcomers with the RC. These recent exiles don't have the contacts, money or information of the Indian system so they cannot speed up the process. But the government, they're scared of upsetting India and they never challenge the Indian government policies' (Dhukar, 13.03.2007).

These sentiments were echoed by one recent refugee in Dharamsala who explained:

> 'I went to the Welfare Office but he [Welfare Officer] told me he could do nothing to help me with RC. He said it was Indian law and rules and they are above us, we have less power than Indian police. For me, I think our government people work honestly but maybe they have no power to help' (Ugyen, 31.03.2007).

The TGiE's powerlessness when it comes to trying to intervene in such cases is revealing, as the administration's inability or, in some cases unwillingness, to stand up for its 'citizens raises the key question of whether a 'government' which cannot protect its citizens deserves that title. Once again, the TGiE has the capacity to enact the 'provider' roles of the state, but not the 'protector' role.

7.3.3 Summary

I want to conclude this exploration of Tibetan citizenship by returning to the distinction set out at the start of this section between citizenship as a legal status which is founded upon membership in a territorial nation-state, and citizenship as a social and cultural construct which is increasingly de-territorialised. Given the situation of exile, it was intuitive to presume that exile Tibetan citizenship would fit only within the latter model. However, having examined the establishment, discourses and material practices of Tibetan citizenship, this case appears to cross-cut these models, both fitting and failing to fit with each. Tibetan citizenship and its reification in the Green Book are certainly intimately connected with ideas of belonging and form a key part of the strategy to unite the exile community under a single national identity. Indeed, in interviews with Tibetan 'citizens' in India, questions regarding this identity prompted responses which overwhelmingly focused on issues of belonging and 'Tibetanness' rather than rights and membership. However, at the same time, exile Tibetan citizenship is also evidently aspiring to legal citizenship and in many ways meets the criteria for state-based citizenship, at least on paper. This includes the conflation of Tibetan nationality with citizenship in exile (Isin 2007), the construction of boundaries of inclusion and exclusion regarding this socio-political community and the enshrinement of rights

and obligations in the 1991 Charter. Whilst TGiE is particularly limited in how these rights and responsibilities can be upheld and enforced, the Green Book system provides an important proxy. In light of such challenges and strategies, whilst not legally equivalent to conventional state citizenship, exile Tibetan citizenship is considerably more state-*like* than definitions of the citizen which refer simply to 'those who belong to almost any human association' (Smith 2002: 105).

What then does this example of exile citizenship tell us about the nature of citizenship more generally, and the state-like functions and ambitions of TGiE in particular? In terms of the former, alongside disrupting the distinction between legal and socio-cultural models of citizenship (see Kurtz and Hankins 2005), this case supports assertions that citizenship is a relative concept which can exist in partial forms with different degrees of citizenship being enacted in different times and places (Doty 1996). In addition, the existence of this state-like citizenship outside a conventional nation-state goes some way to offering new geographies of political membership and new political geographies of membership which can complement existing models of transnational, urban or cosmopolitan citizenship (Castles and Davidson 2000). Turning to TGiE itself, Gordon and Stack's assertion that 'citizenship beyond the State has something to offer the many people who need legitimacy for their struggles to create some room for manoeuvre in their lives' (2007: 130), has strong resonances with this case. As I have argued above, the construction of Tibetan citizenship in exile is a key legitimising strategy for both the institution of the TGiE and for individual exiled Tibetans. Moreover, by framing this identification regime in state discourses of citizenship, including a social contract between TGiE and members of the Tibetan diaspora, this is a central mechanism through which TGiE attempts to assert moral authority and the political right to classify persons as citizens. Crucially, this is also a political right which is receiving a degree of external recognition. Finally, returning to the refugee-citizen binary, this construction of exile Tibetan citizenship challenges such a distinction in important ways. For, whilst TGiE is certainly limited in the protection, security and territorial stability it can offer to its citizens, it has established stable socio-cultural affiliations, shared understandings with other Tibetan exiles (which are indispensable to welfare and democracy) and secure ties to a community. These are key elements of citizen-subjecthood which, by definition, refugees fundamentally lack (Soguk 1999: 19).

7.4 Blurring the boundaries: self-identification, agency and the materiality of identity documents

> *'identity is always mobile and processual, partly self-construction, partly categorisation by others, partly a condition, a status, a label, a weapon, a shield, a fund of memories, et cetera. It is a creolised aggregate composed through bricolage'*
>
> (Malkki 1992: 37)

So far in this chapter two identification regimes operating in parallel have been described and analysed: the GoI conferment of pseudo refugee status materialised in the RC and IC, and the TGiE's institutionalisation of pseudo citizenship through the Green Book. As such, the focus of attention has been on how political and legal identities are constructed from above and imposed on exile Tibetans by state(like) institutions. The aim of this third section is to shift attention to the story from below in order to examine how these identification regimes are received and appropriated by individual Tibetans in exile and, through this, to focus on issues of agency and the varying values attributed to these identity documents. Such an approach reflects recent critical research on Tibetan identity (Korom 1997; Anand 2000; Houston and Wright 2003) and trends in cultural theory-informed refugee studies and feminist geographers' work on citizenship. Where there has been a shift towards deconstructing the iconic figures of the refugee and citizen, focusing on individual stories and voices and attending to the inconsistencies inherent within these. For example, in a call to re-humanise and re-personalise refugee studies, Soguk argues that there is;

> 'no commonality to the refugee experience, save the experience of displacement. Similarly, there is no intrinsic paradigmatic refugee figure to be at once recognised and registered regardless of historical contingencies. Instead... there are a thousand refugee figures whose meanings and identities are negotiated in the processes of displacement in time and place' (1999: 4. see also Turton 2003).

In a similar vein, there are increasing calls to 'ground' the social practices of citizenship by focusing on its contingent and contested nature, the affective element of belonging and the lived experiences and agency of citizens (Marston and Mitchell 2004; Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006; Ho 2008). Drawing on and contributing to ethnographic research examining the relationships between individuals and the identity documents that they hold (Poole 2004; Gordillo 2006; Bakewell 2007), this section focuses on how Tibetans in exile daily negotiate their political and legal identities. The first part attends to issues of dual citizenship, the appropriation of

the 'refugee' label and the significance of pragmatic and patriotic associations with different identity documents. Disrupting this already complex situation further, I then turn to how individual Tibetans use, misuse and manipulate these identification systems, focusing on the heterogeneity of the exile experience and issues of agency, mobility and the acquiring of illegal documentation.

7.4.1 Pragmatism versus patriotism: Indian citizenship and the choice to remain stateless

Whilst the TGiE's involvement in the administration of Indian identity documents to exile Tibetans begins to blur any neat division of identity labels, administrations and documentation, there is a more important issue which cross-cuts these identification regimes and in many ways disrupts the distinction between citizen and refugee in this case. This is the issue of Indian citizenship and the desire of Tibetans to remain as stateless refugees. The Citizenship Act of India 1955 makes provision for the acquisition of citizenship either by birth (Section 3), descent (Section 4) or by naturalisation (Section 6). As such, many of the first Tibetan exiles in India and their children are eligible for Indian citizenship (TPPRC 2006b: 161–3; 332).[143] Considering the matter of dual citizenship, the 1991 Charter of Tibetans in Exile does recognise and sanction dual citizenship, while, though the Constitution of India does not allow holding Indian and foreign citizenship simultaneously, this is not breached as India does not legally recognise Tibetans in India as either Chinese or Tibetan citizens. Indian citizenship brings with it significant and obvious advantages such as the ability to own land and property, apply for government and public sector jobs, vote in Indian elections and acquire an Indian passport and therefore travel abroad considerably more easily than on an IC. However, despite these benefits, the vast majority of Tibetans currently living in India choose not to take Indian citizenship. No exact figures on the number of Tibetans who have applied for or been granted Indian citizenship are available, but estimates put it at between 1–4% of the Tibetan population in India.[144]

This widespread refusal to take Indian citizenship is a 'sensitive and emotional issue' (Tsering 1990: 13) within the exile community and, in many ways, epitomises the struggle at the heart of the exile experience. The most commonly articulated

[143] Section 3 of the Indian Citizenship Act (1955) stipulates citizenship by naturalisation can be acquired by a foreigner who is ordinarily resident in India for 12 years.

[144] This figure was obtained from interviews with Tibetan officials and a report in *The Hindu* 26 May 2005 which cites 2–4% of Tibetans having Indian citizenship. Several of my Indian interviewees did speak of Indian resentment that more Tibetans did not take citizenship, especially those born in India, with such criticism linked to frustration that the Tibetan community had so resolutely refused to assimilate with the host community.

reason for declining Indian citizenship is that this is a deliberate and political choice to remain stateless refugees. From a legal perspective this decision is based on the logical assumption that acquiring citizenship of a recognised state would mean that Tibetans lose their political identity as refugees and the attendant international recognition of statelessness (Van Hear 2003). As such, this is a conscious choice of one legal status over another for, as Ström argues, 'paradoxically, because their nation is not internationally recognised, they must remain stateless and without passports in order to maintain their national identity' (1995: 39).

Specifically, it is the connection between Tibetan national identity in exile and the desire to remain stateless refugees which is fundamental to understanding the identity constructions within the diaspora and Tibetans' perceptions of themselves as a collectivity. As de Voe sums it up:

> 'keeping refugee status is viewed as an action, an act of integrity in defence of the faith. A Tibetan who has kept refugee status is thought to have kept his Tibetan-ness, an ethos mutually understood by Tibetans around the world' (1987: 63).

Intermeshed with the determination to resist assimilation into the host community (see Chapter 5), this 'refugee consciousness' (McLagan 1996: 204) is therefore 'affirmed as patriotism in order to emphasise the desire of returning to Tibet' (Anand 2000: 275). As such, many interviewees spoke of taking Indian citizenship as 'giving up hope of returning home' (Rinchen, 15.03.2007), of 'becoming too settled here [India]... being too comfortable and letting the Chinese and the foreigners see that we don't believe in a free Tibet' (Sangpo, 23.05.2007) and as meaning 'you have lost some of your Tibetan identity. It means you have become part Indian and will start to think that you are Indian' (Thinley, 14.03.2007).

In light of such sentiments, it is unsurprising that those few Tibetans who have taken Indian citizenship usually keep the fact quiet and do face a degree of hostility. When posing the question of Indian citizenship to the focus group of Tibetan university students in Delhi, the participants looked to one member of the group who, appearing embarrassed at first, explained:

> Nyandak: my father, he had issues in the past and was a special case to get Indian citizenship and so I have Indian citizenship. But as well as Indian passport I have a Green Book [everyone nods and agrees]... so really I am a Tibetan. The Green Book is more important, but the Indian passport is

> useful. But for us with Indian citizenship we face so much prejudice here – we are treated as "low" like we have given up on the Tibetan struggle. But this is so hypocritical because Tibetans who get citizenship from the West are seen as "high," like they have achieved something. But what is the difference? I am always Tibetan.
> Palmo: [interrupts] And you know, many high officials have Indian citizenship but they don't say to many people (30.04.2007).

Whilst any discrimination against Tibetans with Indian citizenship is often of the mildest form – for example one interviewee who had recently attained Indian citizenship joked that as 'non-resident Indians' are called 'non-reliable' the same is being said of him – Nyandak's comments raise two important issues: the hierarchies of citizenship and the relationship an individual has with different identity documents.

Turning first to the issue of TGiE's role in Tibetans acquiring 'dual' citizenship more generally, whilst there are no codified TGiE restrictions regarding Indian citizenship, nor any form of punishment for Tibetans who become Indian citizens, societal and ideological pressures against it are considerable. This includes the fact that the Dalai Lama has frequently stated his opposition to taking Indian citizenship (Shiromany 1998: 242; 263; 337) and, as Goldstein argues:

> 'a consequence of this policy (whether intentional or not) is the greater dependence of the refugees on the Dalai Lama's Government. Since as individuals Tibetans are stateless "guests" of the government, their strength lies in their collectivity and is precisely the role of the Dalai Lama's Government to organise and represent them collectively' (1975: 24).

However, accusations like Nyandak's of double standards regarding citizenship in the West are increasingly common. Tibetans in North American and Europe often adopt citizenship and, crucially, are actively encouraged to do so by TGiE on the grounds that citizenship of a Western state would enable Tibetans to become 'ambassadors' for their lost homeland and provide the opportunity to travel to Tibet (RC Officer, Department of Security, 01.05.2007). Meanwhile, in India, not only is there growing frustration that Tibetans in the West are viewed differently by TGiE but, as the community remains in exile and young Tibetans increasingly struggle to find employment (see Chapter 6), the issue of Indian citizenship is becoming a fiercely contested topic. As one interviewee put it, 'should more of us [Tibetans] get Indian passports so we can get Indian jobs and progress and go into Indian politics, or will this mean we will be just one more scheduled tribe in India?' (Chimi, 07.06.2007).

Related to such dilemmas is the relationship between an individual's sense of national identity and the variety of identification papers that they hold. The few Tibetans I interviewed who had Indian citizenship articulated a pragmatic approach to this aspect of their identity. Tsering, a successful businessman in Delhi, explained how:

> 'having Indian citizenship doesn't make me less Tibetan. At the end of the day all it is is a document that makes life easier and I think... I think for all of us here it would help... it would help all Tibetans be more successful here, especially in MT [Majnuka Tilla] with all these land problems. For me I see Indian passport... I am still Tibetan and always will be but having an Indian passport helps me in my business life and in my leisure life' (16.04.2006).

Considering the identity documents discussed in this chapter more generally, this interview extract and Nyandak's earlier comments about his Green Book illustrate an expected division of political subjectivity between a pragmatic relationship with Indian-issued RCs, ICs and passports and a patriotic relationship with Tibetan identity documents. Drawing on research on migrants in Zambia and Angola, Bakewell describes such a distinction in terms of handheld and heartfelt notions of identity and sets out a disjuncture between an individual's sense of identity and the more consistent views of state officials who 'tended to see the papers as symbols of nationality and residence that people should feel privileged to hold' (2007: 1).

In terms of patriotic attachments to the Green Book, most interviewees expressed a strong connection with this document, perceiving it as a material symbol of their national identity, taking pride in using it and regarding the payment of *chatrel* and renewal of their Green Books as a 'sacred duty' (Riga, 21.05.2007). Indeed, in most homes Green Books are carefully wrapped and kept on a high shelf, with height in the Tibetan Buddhist context denoting importance and reverence. Moreover, if I was conducting interviews in Tibetan homes my respondents would often be keen to show me their and their family's Green Books, careful to point out how their *chatrel* payments had been recorded each year. Such actions have striking similarities with Gordillo's (2006) research on the relationship between the indigenous people of the Argentinean Chaco and their *documentos* in terms of how identity papers are perceived as highly valued possessions with great care taken to protect them. Moreover, Gordillo's assertion that this indigenous community has 'internalized their past alienation from citizenship rights through the fetishization of those objects long denied to them: identity papers' (2006: 162) also has strong

resonances with this case. For, whilst the Argentinean *documentos* were issued by a recognised state, I want to argue that the fetishising of Green Books likewise represents a state-like fetishism of the institution of the TGiE (Taussig 1997). The preoccupation with the materiality of these identity documents enacts a reification of state-like power.

However, there are important exceptions to this distinction between pragmatic legal status and an emotional sense of belonging to a nation. For example, as outlined above, the Green Book has significant pragmatic value within and, to a more limited extent beyond, the Tibetan community in exile and in many ways is a more secure and stable document than the RC. Meanwhile, the possession of an RC has somewhat surprising patriotic value in terms of the status of remaining stateless. Crucially, in order to be an 'authentic' Tibetan in exile in India, at least in the eyes of TGiE, an individual must hold both a Green Book *and* an RC. All jobs within the TGiE and its institutions specify that applicants must submit copies of their RC as well as Green Book and, as one currently unemployed college graduate put it:

> 'really I want an Indian passport, but I can't give up my RC – it's too valuable. Any contact with our government or our community and they want to see your RC – so for jobs, scholarships, any help – you always need an RC... So for me if I stay here I will always have the RC' (Dechen, 19.04.2007).

Therefore, while the Green Book proves that an individual is a 'bona fide Tibetan', the RC verifies 'refugee' status in India and therefore confirms that prioritisation of Tibetan identity. As de Voe puts it, 'for the Tibetan, the refugee paper is expressive of a cultural, ethnic and national identity, an allegiance to the past and a candid avowal of dedication to Tibet's future freedom' (1987: 56). Indeed, although the contingency and legal instability of the RC was a source of anxiety and vulnerability for many newcomers (see above), at the same time the annual renewal of this document was seen by a number of interviewees as a powerful and valuable reminder of their refugee status and the fact that India is not 'home', even if they were born there:

> 'Every year we Tibetans have to renew our RCs – a formality like this... and each time this reminds me I am a refugee and each time it provokes a strong emotion.... The RC – this is the real identity of Tibetans in India – it reminds us that we have to go back to Tibet. That we are visitors in India and our stay cannot be permanent' (Bhuchung, 26.02.2006).

As an annual prompt to renew their efforts in fighting for the homeland, the renewal of this document is a key way of sustaining an identity based on statelessness, dislocation and displacement and is thus a poignant material marker of exile Tibetan identity. Moreover, like the fetishisation of identity documents, this situation is not unique to exile Tibetans. Rather, it has significant resonances with Malkki's research among Hutu refugees in western Tanzania where she observed that:

> 'Far from being a "spoiled identity," refugee status was valued and protected as a sign of the ultimate temporariness of exile and of the refusal to become naturalized, to put down roots in a place to which one did not belong. Insisting on one's liminality and displacement as a refugee was also to have a legitimate claim to the attention of "international opinion" and to international assistance. Displacement is usually defined by those who study refugees as a subversion of (national) categories.... Here, in contrast, displacement had become a form of categorical purity' (1992: 35).

Through the action of rejecting Indian citizenship and the patriotic attachment to the RC, the 'refugee' label is therefore not simply a classification imposed from above by the GoI (section 7.2.3), but is actively appropriated by both individual Tibetans and the exile community more generally. Used to define themselves and their wider struggle, the refugee label in this case therefore fundamentally challenges the common conception of refugees as a 'helpless undifferentiated mass of humanity' (Chamberlain 2005: 17) characterised by institutionalised dependency. The choice to remain stateless and the conflicting attachment to different identity documents can also contribute to debates regarding the category of 'citizen' and its disconnection from issues of nationality (Gottlieb 1993). In supporting Bakewell's (2007) assertion that the meaning of legal documentation and notions of nationality are contested and open to a variety of interpretations, Tibetans' experiences of and responses to state categorisations is an important example of 'emerging reconfigurations of citizenship and national belonging' (Hess 2006: 92). Indeed, the fact that the statuses of 'refugee' and 'citizen' each 'grants types of identity benefits and restrictions associated with different axes of [political] power' (Houston and Wright 2003: 230) means that examining how exile Tibetans navigate these options provides an invaluable insight into how individuals negotiate their political and legal identities. It is to such issues that I now turn.

7.4.2 Negotiating identities: flexibility, mobility and illegality

In further disrupting what is already a complex story of identification regimes and documents, this section focuses on how multiple legal and political identities are negotiated on an individual level: how exile Tibetans use, misuse and manipulate these systems and how this is differentiated across the diaspora. In doing so, this turns attention to relationships between identity documents and issues of agency and resistance, border crossings and residency rights and the fuzzy boundaries of the legal and the illegal. As a way into these issues I want to first provide a snapshot of one exile Tibetan whose possession and management of identity documents and legal statuses, whilst specific to her particular circumstances, highlights and contextualises a number of important issues.

Dolma is in her late twenties and was born in Nepal. Her parents are wealthy traders who travel regularly between Tibet, Nepal and India and, aged 13, she was sent to an international school in Pondicherry, South India. Her husband's family had been based in Darjeeling since the 1960s but, 10 years ago, relocated to Dharamsala where they run two successful restaurants and a gem trading business. Dolma manages one of the restaurants and she has a two year old son. I asked Dolma to describe the different identity documents she and her family possess and what they are used for:

> 'My family, when they first were in Nepal they had no papers but these days they all have Nepali passports. My father visits Lhasa twice a year for trading and comes to Darjeeling and Delhi and for this a Nepali passport is OK. Though these days going to Tibet from Nepal is more difficult [...] All in my family and my husband's family have Green Books. For my son I have recently applied for Green Book and we will pay his *chatrel* when he is young. For all Tibetans it is important to have the Green Book, though the *chatrel* it is so low. When the *Kashag* it sold all the government businesses everyone they thought *chatrel* would increase, but it stays the same. For us it's not really important – it's tea money! [laughs]. For me I have RC and IC and Nepali passport. For going to Nepal I always use Nepali passport because with IC you always have problems at the airport. Even by bus those with IC have to pay more at the border. But I have one aunt in Canada and few years back maybe... we were thinking I would go there and work for my uncle's business in Canada and people they say it is easier to travel and get visa on IC than on Nepali passport because with IC you are Tibetan and the Canada government, they think better of Tibetans than Nepalis [laughs]... But in the end I met my husband and I am still here! [...] I have a big collection of IDs [identity documents] these days! I am the organised one in the family so I keep all the documents safe in a shoe box. Documents are so important – many Tibetans don't realise that. [They are] more important than money. So it's important to keep them safe.... So I have Green Books, Nepali papers, RCs, ICs for me, my husband and my in-laws. My in-laws they have Indian passports not RCs – they have been in India since the early days and then it was easy to get RC or Indian passport

> and they are a business family so for them Indian passport is essential, and if they don't work for our government then not having RC is OK. And then with the passport... it gives you security and it's easy to travel. You only renew it every few years – not like RC – and you don't get hassle. You get treated as an Indian would be treated. So I am thinking, with the business here maybe I also will get [an] Indian passport, and definitely for my son I will get him an Indian passport...' (08.03.2007).

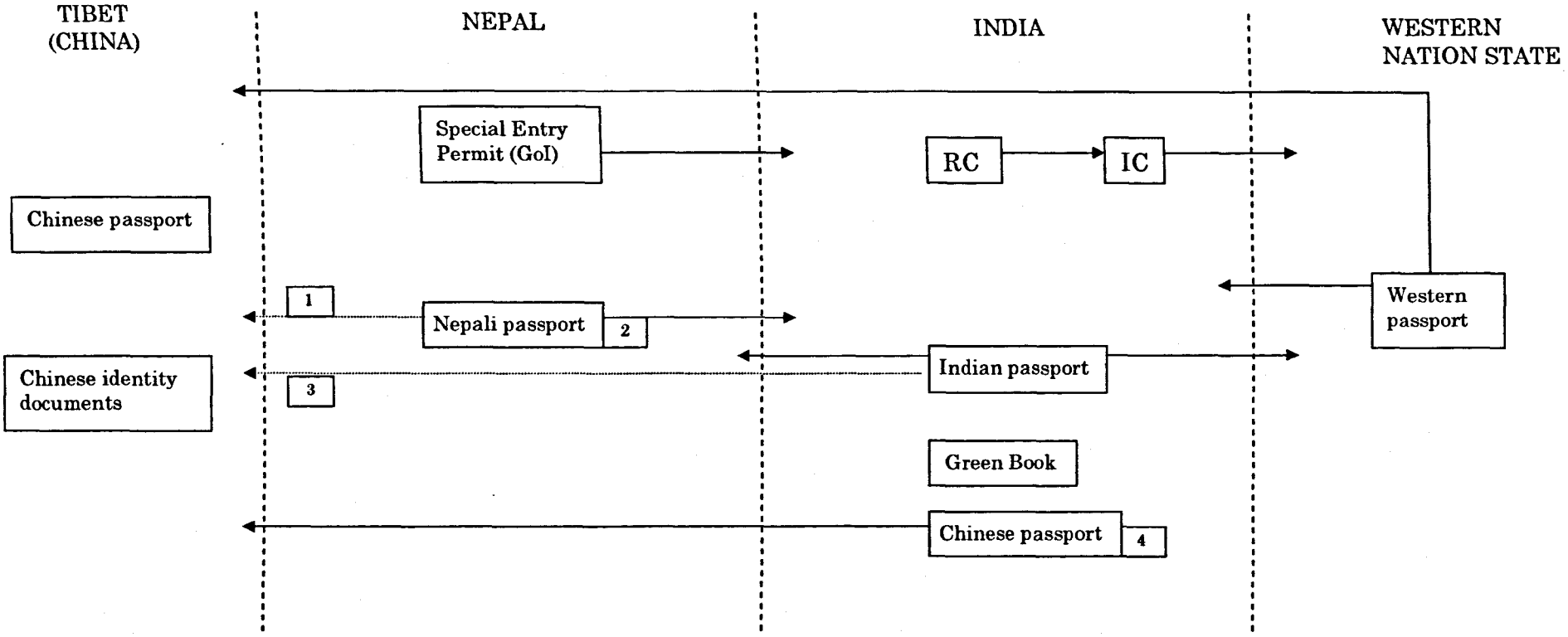
Perhaps the most striking feature of Dolma's narration is the sheer number of identity documents she and her relatives possess. Whilst noting the contrasting socio-economic circumstances and the fact that such a collection of papers has more to do with necessity than privileged choice, Dolma's strategy of acquiring identity documents does have significant resonances with Ong's (1999) description of the flexible citizenship practices of the South-East Asian transnational elite. This includes the obtaining of several passports, the simultaneous holding of multiple loyalties and the economic imperative shaping the 'diasporan subjects' choice of citizenship' (*ibid*: 112). Indeed, Ong's description of the 'multi-passport holder' as 'an apt contemporary figure... [who] embodies the split between state-imposed identity and personal identity caused by political upheavals, migration, and changing global markets' (*ibid*: 2) correlates strongly with assertions made throughout this chapter, albeit that the unrecognised status of TGiE gives an added twist to this case.

However, whilst carrying multiple documents and embracing multiple identities is a consistent feature across exile Tibetans and a key trait of migrants and citizens of stateless nations more generally (Keating 2001), an individual's attachment to different documents varies considerably depending on their circumstances. For example, compare Dolma's narration to Kunchok's tale of being stuck in a legal no-man's land as sketched out at the start of this chapter. With her extensive and well connected family networks, financial security and knowledge of how the systems 'work', Dolma offers a key example of an active 'citizen' in control of her legal and political identities. In contrast, newcomers like Kunchok often find themselves powerless and caught between systems which they do not understand and with which they struggle to engage, let alone intervene in or manipulate. Illustrative of this disparity is how differently this cohort regarded the Green Book compared to those born in exile. Dolma's dismissal of the Green Book and *chatrel* as unimportant, symbolic, almost a bit of a joke compared to her 'proper' passports was common among those settled in exile. In contrast, newcomers like Kunchok frequently expressed pride in their Green Book, narrating how it gave them access

to the exile community and 'peace of mind' (Dekit, 12.03.2006). As well as highlighting the heterogeneous legal statuses and differential experiences across the exile community, these 'cleavages within and among different domains of the diaspora' (Van Hear 2003: 12) also undermine any idealised, unified Tibetan subjectivity. For, not only is TGiE-prescribed Tibetan citizenship only one form of Tibetan identity, but the multiple and often competing forms of identification that characterise this diaspora underscores how exile Tibetan identity itself is complex, contradictory and dynamic (Venturino 1997).

Alongside the proliferation of identity documents, another key issue arising from both Dolma and Kunchok's stories is that of crossing borders. The relationship between state boundaries and identity documents is an obvious one. As 'symbols and institutions that simultaneously produce distinctions between social groups and are produced by them' (Paasi 1998: 80) borders are key points at which political and legal identities come into stark relief and, therefore, 'offer revealing research windows through which to examine the changing meaning of citizenship and statehood' (Sparke 2004b: 279). Based on information from TGiE officials and interviews with Tibetans who have crossed these borders recently, Figure 7a illustrates the identity documents required to cross the state boundaries between Tibet (China), Nepal, India and Western states. In highlighting the complexity of border crossings for exile Tibetans, this diagram demonstrates the sheer number of documents needed, the arbitrariness of border controls, the porosity of effective sovereignty at many boundaries and how immigration policies construct and are contingent upon a strict hierarchy of identity documents.

Figure 7a: Border crossings and identity documents



Border: China/ Nepal

Leaving Chinese papers behind, most Tibetans enter Nepal with no identity documents

1. Whilst travel to Tibet by Tibetans with Nepali passports is legally possible, many are refused entry or are detained for questioning if entering directly from Nepal. Several interviewees explained that going via Singapore or Honk Kong presented fewer obstacles
2. Nepali passports are obtained by Tibetans either legally through residency in Nepal or illegally by Tibetans claiming to be Sherpas.
3. It is difficult for Tibetans to travel to Tibet on Indian passports due to the Dalai Lama and TGiE being based in India
4. There is an increasing trend of Tibetans who have recently arrived in India and want to return to Tibet after their studies applying for Chinese passports at the Chinese embassy in Delhi.

Border: Nepal/ India

Tibetans enter India with an exit permit from the Nepalese Government, a 'Special Entry Permit' from the Indian Government and letter of recommendation from the TGiE run Refugee Reception Centre in Kathmandu. Despite this seemingly comprehensive documentation, however, Tibetans face significant problems at this border, including verbal and physical abuse, detention and deportation.

Nepal is the only country, along with China, which refuses to grant entry to Tibetans carrying an Indian IC, a ruling which causes significant problems for the exiled Tibetan population and has lead to high levels of bribery at the border crossings.

Border: India/ Western states

Delays and questioning are frequently faced at immigration checks by Tibetans travelling on an Indian IC due to immigration officials not being familiar with it as a travel document.

A striking politics of mobility (Massey 1993) and hierarchy of citizenship (Vasta 2006) is apparent from this overview, with desirable and valuable Western passports contrasting most directly with the inability to travel anywhere holding just a Green Book. However, it is the IC which is not only the document most Tibetans travel on, but is the most interesting and revealing document vis-à-vis border crossings. Reflecting the highly unequal and discriminatory international visa regime (Neumayer 2006), though most states are willing to issue visas on the basis of this legally recognised travel document, others are not. The arbitrary nature of this process causes considerable anxiety for exile Tibetans, with many interviewees who travelled on ICs describing how nervous they felt going to Delhi airport and recounting tales of confused, distrustful and abusive immigration officials. As Tendar, who had recently travelled from India to the US and back on an IC, explained:

> 'Travelling with IC is so difficult. At every airport you are treated with suspicion – the immigration officials they stare so hard at our yellow book [IC] and then ask "What is this, where are you from, where is your real passport?" And then they take [the] IC and go speak to their superior. So often they have stopped me for interrogation. I really don't want my children to have to go through this – this feeling that you have no country, that you are not an equal person' (18.03.2006).

Whilst such frustrations were common amongst my interviewees, a few individuals also spoke of the IC in similar terms as the RC with regards to its conferment of refugee status and therefore a symbol of being an exile Tibetan struggling for their homeland. For example, one young Tibetan working for an international Tibetan NGO narrated the following story:

> 'So to get the cheapest ticket my boss, he booked a flight via Uzbekistan. But when I got to Uzbekistan to change planes no one in the airport spoke English and I was really worried about trying to get through with my IC. They stopped me and they took away my papers to a room and made signs for me to wait. So so many hours I had to wait and I was getting so nervous! I mean, I didn't know where I was in the world! [laughs] Then they called me into the room and they had a huge huge book with a photocopy of every passport in it and they turned some pages and there was a copy of [the] Tibetan IC! So they pointed to my IC and to the copy in the book and they let me go – just like that. That day I was so proud that my IC was in the book beside all the other passports. It has a place in the world – we Tibetans refugees are recognised' (Dhukar, 13.03.2007).

In contrast to this account, yet often intrinsic to the issue of border crossings and certainly readily apparent in Dolma's narrative, is the issue of forged and illegally

acquired identity documents. The prevalence of fraudulent identity documents in India is widely acknowledged (*Hindustan Times* 24 February 2007) and, whilst the use of forged papers by exile Tibetans is understandably a sensitive issue, it is important to contextualise these practices.[145] Crucially, the issue of forged documents enables a critical spotlight to be shone on both the instability and the value of these various identity documents and the heterogeneous experiences and unequal access to power within the exile community.

Once again, the divergent experiences of newcomer refugees and those born and settled in exile emerges as a key issue. On the one hand, well-established exiles such as Dolma to a certain degree 'play the system' so as to acquire multiple identity documents in order to travel and develop their business interests. As such, '[H]uman agency remains a decisive factor in the genealogy of identification practices, which tend automatically and immediately to generate strategies by individuals... to undermine their effectiveness' (Caplan and Torpey 2001: 7). On the other hand, for many newcomers forging documents is the only way for them to remain in India or attempt to travel abroad and this is a process which is understandably fraught with anxieties and dangers. For example, in order to apply for an RC, newcomer refugees have to falsely 'prove' that they were born in India by persuading elderly Tibetans to 'become' their parents. Not only does this place these individuals in a vulnerable position given that if there is any cause for scrutiny of their background they could be expelled from India, this was also a practice which a number of my interviewees described as an upsetting betrayal of their sense of identity.

Considering briefly the impact of these practices of forgery on the diaspora more generally, whilst this reputation for transgressing Indian law does reflect badly on the community as a whole, these issues also highlight the ambiguity of law more generally. For example, the shifting rules regarding RC and ICs, their ad hoc and spatially uneven enforcement and the lack of clarity on both the Tibetan and Indian sides regarding what constitutes the law demonstrates the contested and unstable boundary between the legal and the illegal (see Chatterjee 2004 for a discussion on the 'paralegal' in the Indian context). Notably, such ambivalence regarding the law and identity documents is not unique to this case with, for

[145] Whilst most of my interviewees spoke openly about their own illegally acquired documents and fraudulent practices, it is obviously important to be cautious in how this material is presented, with extra care being taken in anonymising interview material.

example, Poole noting in the context of peasant communities in Peru that there is a 'curious division of labour between the abstract principle of "the law" and the concrete materiality of the "documents" through which law is given form' (2004: 61).

Finally, the issue of forged and illegally acquired documents is also key to understanding the relative importance, utility and socio-economic value of different identity papers. While the efforts to tighten the regulations regarding applications for RCs and TGiE's 'watchdog' role in this process has been discussed above, it is notable, and somewhat surprising, that forgeries are not confined to Indian (and Nepalese) identity documents. Rather, as the Additional Secretary at the Department of Finance explained;

> 'These days we are having problems with forgeries of Green Books... so for example by individuals who failed to register for Green Books many years ago or they didn't keep up with *chatrel* payments and now... now we are more strict about needing Green Book for scholarships and jobs and so now they need one. So we have these cases, they pretend to be newcomers so they can get one easily without making *chatrel* backpayments, but we are having these checks and balances in place now, so every newcomer they will have proper papers from Kathmandu, and for the Green Book we have last year introduced one hologram which goes over the photograph, so hopefully this will help' (02.05.2007).

In addition, several interviewees also described how a small number of Sherpas in Nepal have also forged or falsely claimed to be Tibetan and applied for Green Books in the belief that this document would facilitate asylum claims in Western states. Whilst I could not validate such accusations, this story nevertheless reinforces assertions that the Green Book provides 'proof' of exile Tibetan identity and gives a clear indication of the value of the Green Book in its own right with regards to the social relations and access that it is perceived to enable.

7.4.3 Summary

In focusing on how individual Tibetans negotiate their political and legal identities through identity papers, this section has illustrated how involvement with these documentation regimes is highly differentiated within the population and how individuals are both caught up in and agents of complex and contradictory legal systems. Using personal stories, I have argued that exile Tibetans can both be seen as victims of an international system which values the legally recognised citizen over the stateless, and at the same time as neglected examples of the flexible subject demonstrating flexible citizenship. Thus, though the policies of TGiE, GoI

and numerous other states certainly shape and constrain the construction of exile Tibetan identities, the agency of individuals is also significant and is materialised through choices to refuse Indian citizenship and remain stateless, and to engage with legally questionable practices in order to acquire identity documents. With regards to approaches to identity, this ethnographic research therefore affirms Malkki's (1992) description of identity as mobile, processual and socially and politically constructed. Indeed, the fact that the RC, IC and Green Book are such unstable and contingent identity documents, means that the processual nature of identity is in many ways more acute in this case compared to more conventional 'citizens'. As Kelly notes regarding the case of persons and states in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

> 'identity documents are inherently unstable, both as a technique of governance and as objects to be manipulated.... Far from being static judicial constructs, legal status is generated by laws that are filled with anomalies, are produced by conflicting pressures, and are enforced by multiple institutions' (2006: 91).

Therefore, as objects of both legibility and illegibility and where 'the possibility of forgery is always immanent' (*ibid:* 90), identity papers produce partial and unstable identities which are open to appropriation, manipulation and resistance.

7.5 Conclusion: challenging the citizen-refugee binary

Focusing on identity as an analytical category (Brubaker and Cooper 2000), this chapter has examined the construction and negotiation of Tibetan legal and political identities in exile. Charting the trails of paper through which Tibetan legal identities are created, denied and monitored by the Indian and Tibetan authorities, a picture has emerged of a population caught between the identification regimes of two 'states'. As such, through the lens of identity documents, this chapter has examined the contested label of 'refugee' and the politics of labelling more generally; the construction of state-citizen relations by an unrecognised polity; the agency of individual Tibetans as they negotiate the contradictions of exile life; and the complexity of the relationship between TGiE and its host state. Whilst the purpose of this chapter has been to progressively unpack and problematise the construction of Tibetan legal and political identities in exile, I want to use this concluding section to return to the binary of citizenship and refugeehood. Specifically, I want to position the case of exile Tibetans and

TGiE in terms of opposing theoretical stances on this binary, and then focus on important intersections with issues of sovereignty and statehood.

As outlined at the start of this chapter, conventional political theory sees the citizen as the subject of political life, as the natural bearer of rights and as intrinsically linked to and rooted in the territorial space of the state. Constructed as the archetypal 'other' of the citizen, the refugee is seen as 'the pariah or outcast, the displaced, homeless individual of the twentieth-century diaspora' (Yeoh *et al* 2003: 210–211). This subject is inherently stateless, 'uprooted, dislocated, displaced, forced out, or self-displaced from the community of citizens' (Soguk 1999: 10). However, as this chapter has argued, such a positivist view of essentialised political identities has been critiqued from critical and poststructuralist perspectives, with the convincing assertion made that the analytical categories of refugees, migrants and displaced persons fall into the territorial trap of reifying sovereign state territories (Agnew 1994; Grundy-Warr and Wong 2002). Central to this has been the espousal of the quintessential figure of the refugee as a 'limit person' who 'calls into question the principles of the nation state' (Agamben 1995: 117), undermines 'sovereign territoriality as a *sine qua non* for a coherent domestic community' and challenges the 'heart of identity politics' (Soguk 1999: 216–8). From the other side of the binary, the relationship between citizenship and the territorial state is also challenged by critical scholars with, for example, Linklater asserting that citizenship needs to be uncoupled from issues of sovereignty and territoriality in order to 'envisage forms of citizenship which are appropriate to the post-Westphalian condition of multiple political authorities and allegiances' (1998: 200).

Through focusing on the legal contexts, mundane bureaucratic practices and material identity documents and by highlighting the individual stories behind these identity constructions, this chapter has sought to illustrate how the case of exile Tibetans intersects with and problematises both sets of approaches to the creation of political identities. Firstly, this case fundamentally refutes the citizen-refugee binary. Exile Tibetans in India are simultaneously both de facto citizens and refugees, and yet legally neither. For, whilst most but not all Tibetans in India might be labelled as refugees by the GoI, given India's lack of refugee law, they are not *legally* refugees. Similarly, though all exiles are Tibetan citizens in the eyes of TGiE, this category has no legal standing internationally. Moreover, in holding multiple political and legal identities and at times resisting state identification

regimes through possessing forged identity documents, many of these individuals 'defy the spaces, categories and structures in place to assist and monitor them' (Hyndman 2000: xxviii). Indeed, focusing on the level of the individual and quotidian practices associated with the administration of identity documents, this chapter has highlighted the heterogeneity of the exile community and challenged notions of an idealised and unified Tibetan political subjectivity.

In addition to disrupting the binary of citizen and refugee, this case also highlights significant ambiguities surrounding the particular labels of 'refugee' and 'citizen'. By exploring the disjuncture between exile Tibetans and these conventional categories, this chapter has outlined how each is challenged, subverted and manipulated at a range of scales: from colonial era national legislation to the misinterpretation and ad hoc implementation of policies by officials at the local level and the agency of individual Tibetans in acquiring multiple identity documents. In light of this, exile Tibetans can be seen as an aberration of categories, as existing betwixt and between the identification classifications which dominate our understanding of the world (Malkki 1995). In turn, such ambiguity exposes the socially constructed nature of these categories, the fictive quality of legally statuses and the power relations inherent in the categorising and labelling process (Foucault 1978).

However, this chapter has also demonstrated how revealing this categorisation process itself is and thus the utility of critically working *with* the tradition of categorical thinking. The discourses, bureaucratic processes and everyday practices which constitute the categorising of exile Tibetans as refugees and as citizens exposes the power relations exercised by the key identifying agents of GoI and TGiE. For example, the state or state-like relations and practices of constructing of exclusive boundaries of community membership, sustaining relations with a population through instituting rights and obligations (Torpey 1997) and the creating citizens out of subjects in themselves constitute an important aspect of sovereignty and bureaucratic rationalisation (Caplan and Torpey 2001). Particularly revealing in this respect has been the focus on identity documents as points at which the state passes into material form and thus where state-individual connections, power relations and the politics of the labelling process become visible (Gordillo 2006). Equally instructive has been how individual Tibetans react to, resist and appropriate both the identity documents and accompanying categorisations issued or denied to them. Finally, attending to categorisation

processes has also illustrated how this case turns a number of post-structuralist assumptions about identity on their head. This includes the resurgence of Tibetan nationalism, TGiE's promotion of an essentialised Tibetan identity in exile and the fact that exile Tibetans broadly embrace rather than resist Tibetan citizenship and their relationship with the state-like TGiE. Overall, therefore, this chapter suggests that it is the juxtaposition of seemingly rigid identity categories with variable and unstable practices and relations; the ability of identity documents to both standardise and differentiate individual identities; and the interaction of essentialised identity construction from above with dynamic self-identification practices from below which enables us to get to the core of complex processes of political identity construction.

The third way that this case challenges understandings of the construction of political and legal identities is through disrupting the conventional mapping of 'citizen' and 'refugee' onto the binary of statehood and statelessness. Starting with the state-citizen relationship, I have argued that TGiE aspires to and in many ways enacts a distinctly state-like model of political identity construction. Whilst the legal limitations of Tibetan citizenship should not be underestimated, and its rights and obligations are often symbolic, nevertheless the discourses of citizenship and its material manifestation in the Green Book are important performances of statehood. Moreover, in addition to creating significant bonds of belonging and loyalty within the exile community, this conferment of 'bona fide Tibetan identity' is achieving increasing external recognition. The ability to prescribe and validate Tibetan identity is therefore a key legitimising strategy for TGiE and this case offers a fascinating example of reconfigured relationships between citizenship, statehood and sovereignty.

Turning to the connection between refugeehood and statelessness, a complex picture has emerged from the above discussions. On the one hand, the legal and political status of statelessness is one which has been actively appropriated by many exile Tibetans through their rejection of Indian citizenship and determination to remain 'refugees'. However, on the other hand, the state-like institution of TGiE and its conferment of citizenship on these 'refugees' fundamentally problematises the correlation of Tibetan refugeehood with statelessness. Central to this is the issue of rights. The general assumption is that rights are conceived in terms of geographical relationships (Blomley and Pratt 2001), the most important of which are citizen rights which are enshrined in and

protected by the state (Kibreab 1999). Therefore, as non-citizens belonging to no state, refugees occupy an in-between status with no 'rights to rights' (Arendt 1967; Agamben 1995). The condition of statelessness thus connotes the absence of rights and, 'falling outside of the nation state, they [refugees] are easily rendered invisible and abject' (Sidhu and Christie 2007: 12). This chapter shows that the Tibetan case deviates from such descriptions. As a state-like structure which claims moral legitimacy, TGiE has the potential to act for and to represent exile Tibetans and actively strives to render these individuals 'visible' to the wider international community. Through its construction of Tibetan citizenship, its establishment of rights and obligations which go with this and vouching for individual Tibetans in dealings with the Indian state, TGiE is attempting to create and preserve rights for its 'citizens'. Whilst its lack of legal standing means that the protection that TGiE can offer these individuals is significantly limited, this exile administration has constructed an alternative register of pseudo-legal status for its exile population. As such, though exile Tibetans do not have the full legal protection and rights of conventional citizenship, they also do not lack legal status in the same way as the stateless refugee archetype does. This case therefore exposes the variation and the ambiguity of rights and begins to blur the boundaries between citizen and refugee, statehood and statelessness, sovereign and non-sovereign.

Chapter 8
Democracy and Elections in Exile: The Strategies and Limitations of (Non)territorial Exile Politics

Figure 8.a: Ballot box at TCV Day School, Dharamsala, TPiE election day, 18th March 2006. (Photograph: Tenzin Dasel)

8.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters have focused on issues of territoriality, governance and political identities respectively and, in this final substantive take on the functioning of TGiE, I want to focus on an aspect of this exile administration which brings together these themes: the establishment of democracy in exile and the organisation of Tibetan parliamentary elections. Hailed as the most important achievement of the exile Tibetan community, the democratisation of Tibetan politics is central both to how this exile administration functions, and how it presents itself to the international community. As such, this chapter focuses on the ideological and procedural development of Tibetan democracy and its material manifestation in the parliamentary election system in order both to unpack the raison d'être and everyday operations of the TGiE, and to reflect on what a territory-less polity can contribute to existing theories of democracy. As Huntingdon (1991) has argued, we are currently in a 'third wave of democratisation' where 140 of the world's nearly 200 countries hold multiparty elections and where the ideological popularity of democracy has never been stronger (UNDP 2002). However, whilst we have witnessed a 'contagion of democratic ideas' (Anderson 1999: 7), much of this democratic progress is shallow and democracy is increasingly experiencing intense pressures from within and

without. It is therefore salient to look at what appears to be a nascent and relatively successful democracy that is carving out a unique path in the adverse circumstances of exile.

With the emergence of new democracies in the last 20 years, and an increasing trend towards electoral reform in well-established democracies, there has been growing interest in the theories of democracy and the study of electoral systems from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Acknowledging that democracy is an inherently messy and contested concept, approaches to democracy can be divided into three broad sets of debates into which this case makes a number of critical interjections. In engaging with each of these sets of debates, the overarching question posed here concerns the implications of the combination of Tibetan culture and the situation of statelessness for both the intrinsic value of democracy within this exile community, and for the everyday functioning of this democracy.

The first issue of contention regards the purpose of democracy. In general, there is a division between analytical and instrumental approaches which define democracy as a mechanism or practice of government, a set of institutional arrangements and a means to an end (see Dahl 1989, 2000; Putman 1993; Lijphart 1999) and ideological or normative approaches which define democracy as a political philosophy, an ideal and end in itself (e.g. Falk 1995; Sen 1999). A second set of debates centre on the issue of the cultural contingency of democracy. On the one side are scholars such as Lakoff (1996) and Linz and Stepan (1997) who 'argue that only societies with particular institutional arrangements — those that guarantee meaningful popular participation in the spirit of the Western liberal political tradition — should be referred to as democracies' (Frechette 2007: 98). On the other side are theorists who perceive democracy as a relative political form significantly influenced by and able to thrive in different local political cultures (Schaffer 1998; Saward 2003). An important aspect of this debate has focused on the issue of Asian values and democracy, with a number of Asian leaders in the 1990s asserting that values such as loyalty towards the family and nation, collectivism over individualism and preference for social stability over civil liberties predisposed these societies to authoritarian rather than liberal democratic models of governance (Lee 1995. see critiques from Fukuyama 1997). These issues will be addressed broadly in light of the role of Tibetan cultural and religious values in shaping this form of democracy, and specifically through the case of Tibetan party-

less politics. Thirdly, debate has also revolved around the role of the state and territory vis-à-vis the functioning of democracy. 'Discussions of democracy usually assume the territorial state as the frame and opportunity for its execution and practice' (Smith 2000: 158) and, as such, democracy is conventionally seen as a territorialised form of politics (Dahl 2000), with territorial boundaries specifying 'the basis on which individuals are included and excluded from participation in decisions affecting their lives' (Held 2006: 292). However, in light of the 'extension of orthodox democratic practices beyond national boundaries' (Saward 2003: 31), increasing academic attention is being paid to the role of external actors in the initiation and legitimising of democracy and the concept of 'cosmopolitan democracy' (Archibugi *et al.* 1998; Linklater 1998) premised on 'flexible frameworks based on the rights of the global citizen, freed from territorial restrictions' (Pugh *et al* 2007: 107).

Remaining with issues of territory and statehood, as the mechanism through which modern democracy functions, electoral systems are conventionally territorialised decision-making processes whereby the consent of the governed is translated into governmental authority through the act of voting for representatives. As such, elections are a key site of engagement between citizens and 'the state' and, given the situation of exile, the role and design of exile Tibetan elections are particularly unusual. The operation of Tibetan parliamentary elections constitutes possibly the most widely dispersed representative democracy in the world, with voters on three continents exercising their franchise on the same day to elect 43 members of the Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE). Yet, this conventionally state-like political function is conducted by a territory-less administration operating within the sovereign space of a recognised nation-state. Thus, in terms of existing understanding of election systems, the Tibetan example poses a fundamental question: if elections are conventionally based on political representatives representing voters in territorially defined constituencies, what happens in parliamentary elections in a 'state' without sovereignty over territory?

At first glance, the case of TGiE, and indeed my methodological approach and epistemological framework, appear to have little in common with traditional theorisations of electoral systems. Unlike policy-based election studies (e.g. Franklin and Wlezien 2002) a mass-survey is not being conducted to determine voting patterns and, given the uncommon situation of exile, there is limited utility in typologising this electoral system and drawing direct comparisons to other cases

as has been the convention for electoral studies in political science (e.g. Lijphart 1995; Landman 2000). Similarly, though focused more specifically on issues of territory the sub-field of electoral geography has few intersections with this study (Taylor and Johnston 1979). Whilst the overarching aim here is to use the TPiE electoral system as a vehicle by which to explore broader political issues within the exilic community, electoral geography research has traditionally focused on the technocratic and administrative aspects of elections, producing empirical description based on quantitative analysis. However, recent developments on the fringes of electoral geography do offer important connections with this case. This includes a focus on electoral systems outside the traditional domain of established democracies in the 'first world', and, crucially, a 'deeper theoretical involvement which... enables electoral geographers to make a wider contribution to the understanding of contemporary politics' (Shelley *et al* 1990: 10). Indeed, social and political geographers such as Bell and Staeheli (2001), Secor (2001) and Clayton (2002) have used elections as a lens through which to view the diffusion of political information, the relationships between territory and political authority, and political identity construction; issues directly relevant to this study. Crucially, such studies represent a transfer in focus from the grand strategy of elite politicians and electoral engineers to the actions and opinions of voters. This shift has instigated an important change in methodological approaches with an increasing adoption of qualitative research techniques, including ethnographies. Correlating with such an approach, the qualitative methods employed in this study enable both a top-down and bottom-up picture of Tibetan elections and democracy to be constructed. This therefore provides a nuanced interpretation which is sensitive to the fact that democracy is a political form which emerges through complex processes of cultural practice and everyday application.

In light of these theoretical and methodological issues, this chapter is structured around three takes on exile Tibetan politics. The first section focuses on Tibetan democracy. After charting the unique evolution and characteristics of Tibetan democracy, attention will turn to the official rationale for such democratisation, framed in terms of consolidating the exilic body politic and the strategic seeking of external legitimation. The question of just how democratic exile Tibetan democracy is will then be posed, and the limitations and successes of this nascent political experiment traced. Secondly, attention will turn to the election system for the TPiE, sketching out its idiosyncratic quota system and exploring the narratives of community unity and attachment to the homeland posited by the political elite to

justify this system. Countering this will be a focus on the critiques of and challenges to this electoral system as asserted by various groups within the electorate, including issues of a lack of accountability, the perpetuation of divisive regionalism and voter apathy. This section will conclude with a discussion on the relationship between political representation and territory – both 'real' and symbolic. Finally, bringing together and ethnographically illustrating the range of issues raised by these discussions on exile democracy and the structure of the election system, the final section will focus on the 2006 TPiE elections. Seen through the lens of an innovative electioneering youth coalition, a montage of research materials – field diary and interview extracts, photographs and campaign posters – will be used to build up a picture of the moments and sites of this election. The chapter will conclude by returning to the relationship between instrumental and strategic roles of democracy and the reconfigurations of political representation, territory and statehood which this case throws into relief.

8.2 Tibetan Democracy in exile

> *'Change is also coming to the Tibetan political system. It is unfortunate that it happens in exile, but this does not stop us learning the art of democracy. I have long looked forward to the time when we could devise a political system, suited both to our traditions and the demands of the modern world.... This democratisation has reached out to Tibetans all over the world.... I believe that future generations of Tibetans will consider these changes among the most important achievement of our experience in exile'*
> Dalai Lama, speech to All-Party Parliamentary Group, London, 21 March 1991 (TPPRC 2003: 2).

Given that 'liberal democracy remains the only coherent political aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe' (Fukyama 1992: xiii), '"democracy" is an enormously rich, suggestive, evocative political term, and it is partly this fact that makes it such a potent political weapon' (Saward 2003: 14). In examining the development and rationale of exile Tibetan democracy, how it can be understood using existing democracy theory and what it adds to our understanding of democratic governance more generally, this section focuses both on democracy as a normative ideal and as having instrumental functionality within the exile community.

8.2.1 The evolution of a 'unique' democracy

Tibet prior to 1959 has been called an 'absolutist theocratic state' (Ardley 2003b: 350) with political power vested in the Dalai Lamas on whose behalf government ministers ruled. As such, the spheres of governance and politics lacked any

mechanisms for political participation. However, it was from Tibet's religious traditions that nascent roots of democracy can be traced, with consensus-based decision-making being the guiding principle of life in monastic institutions (Monkhar 1991). A more direct engagement with democratic ideas was initiated by the current Dalai Lama who, after assuming the temporal and spiritual leadership of the Tibetan state in 1950, and before his flight into exile, had, in his own words:

> 'come to the conclusion that in the changing circumstances of the modern world the system of governance in Tibet must be modified and amended so as to allow the elected representatives of the people to play a more effective role in guiding and shaping the social and economic policies of the state. I... firmly believed that this could be done through democratic institutions based on social and economic justice' (foreword to 1963 Constitution for Tibet, cited in TPPRC 2003: 13).

However, although the Dalai Lama introduced a number of progressive changes in Tibet through his Reform Committee (Gyalpo 2004b),[146] his initiatives were severely impeded by the Chinese occupying forces, and it was only in exile that he had the freedom to implement his vision of introducing democracy based on the union of political and spiritual value systems.

Therefore, whilst there are antecedents to democracy in pre-1959 Tibet, the exile community had no direct experience of democratic governance when it came to India, and the participatory democracy developed by the Dalai Lama and TGiE since 1960 was the first in Tibet's history. The evolution of Tibetan democracy in exile, in both an ideological and instrumental sense, can be divided into two phases (Chief Election Commissioner 16.03.2006). From the establishment of the first parliament on 2nd September 1960[147] until 1990 was a period of gradual democratic reforms, where the idea of democracy informed by Buddhist values was proposed, political changes were predominantly symbolic with limited impact on Tibetan society, and where the Dalai Lama ultimately made the final decisions. Secondly, substantial fiscal and electoral reforms in the 1990s radically altered both the democratic functioning of the exiled administration and the political role of the Dalai Lama.

This first exile parliament saw the abolition of hereditary titles and the traditional system of appointing monk and lay officials to each position. The role of the

146 This was a committee of 50 monks and lay officials who had the task of suggesting and implementing changes to the administrative set-up in Tibet.
147 The 2nd September as been observed by the exile Tibetan community ever since as 'Democracy Day'.

parliament's 13 members was largely symbolic and, whilst these deputies were elected from the exile population, their candidacy was based on nomination by the Dalai Lama. It was not until 1975 that candidates put themselves forward for election in the primary rounds (Edin 1992). This nascent democracy was formalised in the 'Draft Constitution for the Future Tibet' promulgated by the Dalai Lama in 1963 (see Chapter 3). Combining principles of Buddhism with Western popular democracy, the constitution outlined democratic reforms which would serve as a guideline for a future Tibetan polity. However, significant controversy surrounded this document with major points of contention being clauses that related to the provision to impeach the sovereign position of the Dalai Lama and the renouncement of his leadership in the government of future Tibet. Protests and petitions from the diaspora ensued, imploring the Dalai Lama not to remove his political prerogatives and, in deference to these demands, the Dalai Lama reluctantly took out the offending clauses (Shiromany 1998: 277).

The 1980s saw a number of abortive attempts to develop a more genuine democracy in exile, political scandals in Dharamsala and the rise of organisations run along factional lines which were, according to the outspoken Tibetan writer Jamyang Norbu, 'basically reactionary, and their influence on society unhealthy and divisive' (2004: 19). As a result, the Dalai Lama intervened in 1990, introducing a number of major reforms and accelerating the process of democratisation. After dissolving the exile parliament and suspending it for a year, His Holiness reinstated it as a fully-fledged legislative body with an expanded membership, independent authority and effective powers over the executive. In addition, the Dalai Lama renounced his ultimate authority to endorse elected representatives and appoint *Kalons*, the latter of which was henceforth replaced with election by the parliament.

A further step towards genuine democracy was the adoption of the 'Charter of Tibetans in Exile' in 1991 which, specifically designed for the interim exile situation, documents the Dalai Lama's vision of the period of exile as a chance to *practice* democracy in order to implement it in Tibet. Establishing the three pillars of Tibetan democratic government (executive, legislature and judiciary), the Charter also instituted the Election Commission and formalised democratic practices at a local level by introducing Local Assemblies to Tibetan settlements in

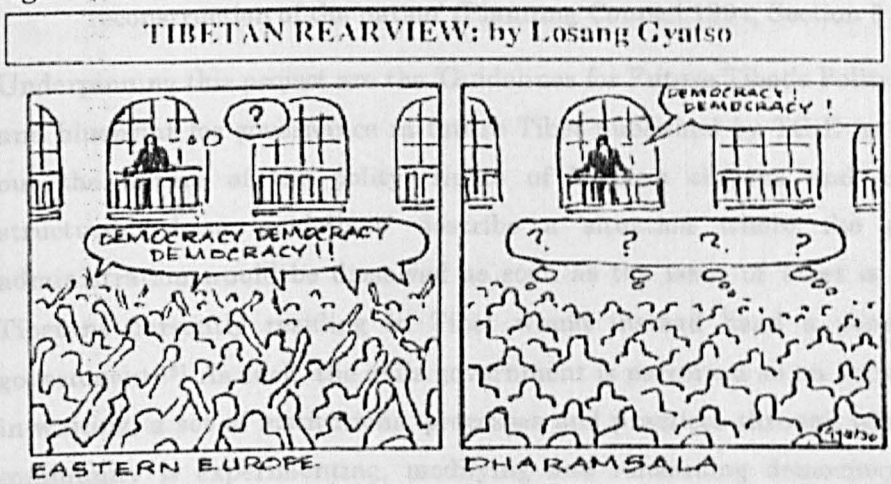
India and Nepal (see Chapter 5).[148] Finally, the most recent reform has been the direct election of the *Kalon Tripa* in 2001, a move which Gyalpo described as "'a great leap forward" that ushered in a new and more mature phase in the governance of the Tibetan administration' (2004b: 26).[149]

Apparent from this chronology is the fact that Tibetan democracy has had a highly unusual development and is significantly different in evolution and form from that of Western democracies. It is usually prudent to avoid naïve discussions of Tibetan exceptionalism in favour of contextualising Tibet and Tibetan issues (see Anand 2006). However, in the case of Tibetan democracy, descriptors relating to 'uniqueness' are genuinely apt and, as I discuss below, apply to the transition to democracy, the ideologies underpinning this model of democracy and its instrumental functioning. Perhaps the most unusual aspect of Tibetan democracy is the fact that rather than the conventional process of democracy being driven by popular demand (often through uprisings and armed struggles) or imposed by a foreign power, it was instituted from the top-down by Tibet's traditional leader, and voluntarily established by Tibetans at his initiative. As such, Tibetan democracy is often referred to as a blessing or gift from the Dalai Lama, with one interviewee describing how His Holiness 'gave democracy like Buddha giving teachings' (Togden, 18.03.2006). This reversal of the norms of democratisation is deftly illustrated by Losang Gyato's cartoon (Figure 8.b) and, as Edin (1992) points out, traditional literature on democracy simply fails to take into account a situation where a leader wishes to give away his power due to his convictions.

148 The Election Commission is a two-tier institution with the Dharamsala-based Central Election Commission as the apex body and 65 Local Election Commissions in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Europe, North America, Taiwan, Japan and Australia. The Commission organises and oversees a series of elections within the exile community, including those for the TPiE, *Kalon Tripa*, Local Assemblies, Tibetan Freedom Movement and Board of Directors of Co-operative societies.

149 The 2001 *Kalon Tripa* election was won by Professor Samdhong Rimpoche with 84% of the votes polled. He was re-elected in the second *Kalon Tripa* election in 2006 with almost 91% of the vote.

Figure 8.b Tibetan Review, January 1992: 11



8.2.2 Discursive framing of Tibetan democracy: consolidating the body politic and seeking legitimacy

Shifting attention to how this model of democracy is framed and justified in elite narratives, I want to argue that this case not only challenges conventional understandings of the origins of democratic governance, but also provides a valuable insight into TGiE as an institution and its self-perceived raison d'être. Crucially, as I explore in this section, democracy is conceived as key to both TGiE's shaping of the internal dynamics of the exile community, and how this exile administration presents itself to and positions itself within the international community.

Tibetan democracy has revealing and complex temporalities and spatialities. Whilst only exile Tibetans can engage in democratic practices vis-à-vis their own government, Tibetan democracy has a very specific relationship to the homeland of Tibet. The parliamentary election system is designed to foster a symbolic attachment to the territory of Tibet (discussed below), and the period in exile is perceived by the exile leadership as a chance for the community to experience and practice democracy in anticipation of implementing democratic governance within a future Tibet:

> 'A democratically elected, representative government, with an open, accountable and efficient administration, will be one of the greatest needs of future independent Tibet. Professional expertise in conducting elections will be invaluable in devising appropriate modes of democratic governance after

> Chinese occupation has ended, and in undertaking the necessary reconstruction of the nation' (Planning Council 1994, Section 9.3.9).[150]

Underpinning this project are the 'Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity', a manifesto and blueprint for governance in future Tibet published by TGiE in 1992. Setting out the nature of the polity, rights of Tibetan citizens and administrative structures, these 'guidelines' describe a situation where the present exile administration would be dissolved as soon as the issue of Tibet is resolved, and Tibetans currently residing in Tibet would instead head a popularly elected government.[151] As such, the exile government is perceived as an active democracy-in-waiting; a set of institutions, processes and practices through which the exiled community is experimenting, modifying and rehearsing democracy in order to employ it 'for real' back in the homeland. Alongside being portrayed as offering hope for a future democratic Tibet, the development of democracy is also presented as key to ensuring stability and security for the community's shorter-term future in exile. For, in light of an imminent power vacuum, the Dalai Lama established the system of democratic leadership as a way of inculcating a sense of individual political responsibility amongst exiled Tibetans and preparing for a smooth transition period after his death (Ardley 2003b).

In addition to this temporal dimension there is an important spatial context. The establishment and functioning of TGiE within India – the world's largest democracy – has been a key influence. On the one hand, the decades spent within this accommodating host state has, Norbu (1990) argues, provided the Tibetan community with an ideal space, time and opportunity to experiment with democracy and enabled new structures of government to emerge. On the other hand, Indian democracy itself has been an inspiration to the Tibetan community (Chenga, 08.03.2006). Not only was the 1963 Constitution based on the Indian Constitution, but the Election Commission has 'held discussions with Indian central and state government election officials' regarding the parliamentary election system and has translated Indian election documents into Tibetan (Planning Council 1994, Section 9.3.2). Western models of liberal democracy have also been drawn upon by the Tibetan leadership. The Dalai Lama's extensive

150 However it should be noted that, given the current 'Middle Way' policy of the Dalai Lama and TGiE which is calling for genuine autonomy for Tibet within a greater China rather than full independence (see Chapter 3), it is puzzling to speculate how a democratic Tibet would function within the one-party state of China.

151 Crucially, the Dalai Lama would not be head of, or play any role in such a government, and as such this marks a significant shift from the 1963 Constitution as far as the power and the responsibility of the Dalai Lama are concerned.

travels to the West and meetings with numerous world leaders have provided the Tibetan leader with first hand accounts of how modern democratic systems function – or indeed fail to function – and, as Sangay notes, such experiences meant that 'the Dalai Lama's political maturity and embrace of democracy deepened over time' (2003: 123).

However, as stressed by many of my interviewees, it is misleading to trace Tibetan democracy solely to Indian and Western models as the influence of Tibetan cultural and religious values is significant with, for example, the 1963 Draft Constitution reinterpreting 'democracy as if it is – and has always been – a part of the Tibetan tradition, with the Buddha himself as its ultimate source' (Frechette 2007: 109). Indeed, whilst the limitations of a democracy bestowed by a leader who is widely regarded as having 'enlightened governance' (*ibid*: 108) will be discussed below, broadly speaking, an ongoing compromise is being sought by the exile elite in terms of constructing a system of democracy that is culturally and religiously attuned to the community it represents, yet at the same time displays democratic practices acceptable to a Western audience. This has proved to be a challenging balancing act, as illustrated by opposition to the Dalai Lama's attempts to renounce his political power (see above) and heated debate regarding the inclusion of the term 'secular' in the 1991 Charter (see Chapter 3).

One place where the role of Tibetan cultural and religious values is clearly manifest is in the choice to establish a partyless political system in exile. Despite attempts to introduce political parties – such as the arguably misnamed 'National Democratic Party of Tibet'[152] – the current system is a rare example of non-party democracy. In outlining the Buddhist underpinnings of such a system, Samdhong Rimpoche has explained that:

> 'equality can be established in the day to day living through co-operation and not through competition.... Realising this phenomenon of human behaviours, Lord Buddha had long back recommended a democracy free from competition. Therefore, a kind of partyless democracy could be an alternative where each individual may have the freedom to deal with every issue according to his or her wisdom, without imposition of any conditions from groups or ideologies' (*The Pioneer* 28 November 1996).

152 Founded in 1994, the National Democratic Party of Tibet (NDPT) has a broadly nationalist and pro-independence agenda. However, the NDPT has failed to make a significant impact on exile politics as it lacks fundamental characteristics of a political party: the will to govern, a durable structure at a local level and coherent ideology (Dasel 24.02.2006; Yonten 19.02.2006).

As such, with no opposition party to challenge government policies there is also no guaranteed support from a ruling party, and so each proposal has to be rigorously argued and justified; a practice inherent to Buddhist debating (*Kalon*, Department of Finance and DIIR, 10.04.2006). Partyless politics is thereby perceived by the TGiE leadership as consonant with Tibetan cultural values which promote humility and regard self-promotion negatively. Such distinctly Tibetan democratic values are illustrated by one *Chitue* who stated that:[153]

> 'In my case, I have been elected as a representative of Kham region but... personally speaking, I don't have a particular ability and capability. I think the people who have elected me have been paying attention to my writings [in the exile Tibetan press]. I didn't expected to be elected, but as our society is democratic, I am willing to take the right' (Tsomo, 29.03.2007).

The choice of this model of democracy was also explained by TGiE interviewees as reflecting the nature of their existence as an exiled government, as a concession to the quietly expressed wishes of the host state and as being key to forging social unity within the exile community. With regards to the latter argument, this resonates both with classical democratic theory (Dahl 2000) and with Museveni's (1994) argument that multiparty democracy is premature for many African states because parties have no grounding in the social reality and would polarise the population on sectarian rather than political grounds.[154] Indeed, several Tibetan MPs made the argument that political factions and the internal divisions they exacerbate are detrimental to the political expediency of retaining the identity of traditional Tibet. Conversely, democratisation is perceived by the exile elite as key to strengthening and uniting the geographically dispersed community and, as a result, is seen as playing an integral part in the freedom struggle. As both Edin (1992) and Herzer (2001) assert, this coupling of participatory democracy and the advancement of a freedom movement within the institution of TGiE is a calculated political strategy which has few parallels within traditional literature on democracy.

Turning attention to the role of democracy vis-à-vis the international community, the discourse and visible implementation of democracy has been used by TGiE to frame this polity within international norms of good governance and therefore to position the broader Tibet issue within a pre-defined moral framework. For

153 The terms *Chitue* and MP are used interchangeably in this chapter, as they were in interviews with Tibetan officials and voters.
154 Such comments from Museveni should, however, be seen in light of his subsequent actions in Uganda, including his abolition of Presidential term limits before the 2006 elections and the harassment of the democratic opposition.

example, since its inception, Tibetan democracy has had the implicit aim of setting contemporary exile Tibetan political culture apart from both pre-1959 Tibetan politics and the modern Chinese state. A 'potent weapon for the cause and... an absolute necessity for the credibility of the freedom struggle', Tibetan democracy is framed as repudiating 'Chinese propaganda claims that Tibetan independence would mean a reversion to theocratic feudalism' (Norbu 2007: 35) and ensuring that the 'exiled administration is seen as occupying the moral high ground in comparison with China' (Ardley 2003b: 358). Allegations that the Tibetan struggle seeks to resurrect old Tibet are thereby dismissed as obsolete (Gyalpo 2004b) and a clear differentiation is made between Dharamsala's progressive approach to participative politics with Beijing's one-party communist system.

Closely linked to this is the strategic and discursive use of democratisation as a way of eliciting respect and support from the international community. As Anand notes, 'the Tibetan elite has been learning the language of international politics as dominated by the West' (2000: 281), a language in which democracy is widely regarded as 'the leading standard of political legitimacy in the current era' (Held 2006: x). Therefore, aimed at a Western audience and supported by young Tibetans educated at Indian, European and North American universities, the transition to democracy in exile has been a key mechanism by which international legitimacy is sought by TGiE. Such explicitly outward looking rationales corroborate the shift in focus from democracy as contingent primarily on domestic factors to the importance of international influences and global interconnections (Huber *et al* 1999). However, rather than the external pressures of economic liberalisation and structural adjustment as has dominated the 'impetus, rationale and sometimes material support for democratic initiatives' in Africa (Anderson 1999: 9), in this case TGiE is actively seeking a Western audience to appreciate and actively support its embrace of liberal democracy. As such, the TGiE's employment of the rhetoric of democracy can usefully be understood in terms of Appadurai's concept of 'ideoscapes':

> 'concatenations of images... [that] are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and ... are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation* and the master term *democracy*' (1996: 36. emphasis in original).

Identifying the global circulation and mediation of key political and ideological principles, 'ideoscapes' not only opens up conceptual space for democracy to be

renegotiated and reworked in different cultural contexts, but it frames Tibetan democratisation as a key image-building exercise and an attempt to situate the Tibetan exiled polity and its broader cause firmly within contemporary discourses about good governance.

8.2.3 How democratic is Tibetan democracy?

Presented so far have been official narratives of the transition to democracy: what the nature of Tibetan democracy is and why it looks this way. Attention will now shift to questions of how genuine and deep the democratic transition in the Tibetan community in exile is. At first glance, this case seems to be an 'ideal' model of democratic transition. It was not imposed by external actors and spared a violent popular uprising. However, ironically, the very fact that Tibetans in exile did not experience democratisation through first-hand personal involvement means that the process has been far from smooth, straightforward or complete. Due to its initiation as a conscious policy decision by the Dalai Lama, Tibetan democracy has not evolved gradually over time, nor been actively built from within the community and embedded in local social structures. As such, Tibetans arguably have little sense of its ownership. As a number of politically active interviewees asserted, a gifted democracy is impossible to refuse, but without asking for it in the first place it is also difficult to appreciate and appropriate: it is 'like a solution in search of problems' (Nyendak, 05.03.2006). The resulting weak form of democracy is manifested in a lack of public awareness of democracy, a reluctance to assume both decision-making and leadership responsibilities and low participation in democratic practices. Therefore, whilst democracy exists in terms of institutions, legislative provisions and 'rhetorical hype' (Thinley 2001: 3), this is in many ways a paper democracy: one which has lofty ideals but which has yet to become a way of life that permeates all levels of the exile society (Boyd 2004).

A second stumbling block to the realisation of a 'fuller' democracy, even defined in the exile community's own terms, is the unique patron-deity status of the Dalai Lama. Being an unelected monk, the Dalai Lama's political legitimacy is based on his 'special wisdom' and the obedience with which his citizens treat him. This appears anachronistic to a Western audience and sits uncomfortably with liberal democratic ideals (Ardley 2003b). Indeed, despite his intention to withdraw from Tibetan politics, 'with or without official constitutional authority, the Dalai Lama remains the most powerful and influential leader among Tibetans' (Sangay 2003: 126). As such, Tibetan democracy appears to be stuck in a form of democracy-

autocracy in many ways redolent of Taiwan's 'guided' model (Cooper 2003) or Singapore's 'trustee' model of democracy (Roy 1994). Parallels with 'Asian values' include the preference for consensus and social harmony over political confrontation, the rejection of political pluralism and the prioritisation of community cohesion. However, with its premise on Tibetan Buddhism rather than Confucianism and the limitations of the exile context, this case raises important questions for the Asian democracy literature. As Frechette argues, exile Tibetan democracy asks;

> 'whether there are one or more distinct Asian forms of democracy, whether Asian democratic forms should be viewed as viable alternatives to Western forms, and whether Asian forms can be considered "consolidated"... as opposed to "in transition" toward some other political arrangement' (2007: 99).

In terms of how the position of the Dalai Lama vis-à-vis Tibetan democracy is played out on the ground, the respect and faith Tibetans have for him has meant that many Tibetans participate in democratic activities primarily because the Dalai Lama asked them to do so, rather than wanting to influence exile politics per se. Amongst younger Tibetans there is growing frustration with such dependence on the Dalai Lama – what one interviewee called a 'mental block' within the community – and a lack of engagement with 'democratic responsibilities'. As a young careers councillor in Delhi put it:

> 'Democracy! We have no democracy. The older generations, they have not grasped the concept of democracy – for them whatever the Dalai Lama says, they will believe and go along with, for them his word that is Tibetan law.... For Tibetans in exile to unite behind a common cause the concepts of democracy need to be better understood... for now we have the legislative provisions, but a mentality of democracy in our community it is severely lacking' (Karchung 01.03.2007).

The third limitation of exile Tibetan democracy are the challenges faced when the principles of partyless politics are translated into reality. Whilst its resonances with Tibetan cultural and religious values are significant, its practical implications mean that the freedom to dissent – a core feature of modern democracy – is taboo within Tibetan society. As a result, with MPs effectively acting both as the ruling party and the opposition, the parliament rarely proposes alternatives to government policies and, when there is political controversy or confrontation, the system struggles to cope. In light of this, there is increasing criticism from younger Tibetans who argue that the lack of parties creates a dulled and stagnated politics. As a politics graduate in Majnuka Tilla put it; 'our politics has no atmosphere of

debate for it is very hard for someone to be different, to be radical or outspoken in our government' (Chimi, 07.06.2007).

Whilst such issues provide a significant barrier to the deepening of Tibetan democracy, it should also be acknowledged that this democracy is still very young and, given the community's lack of democratic experience in Tibet, progress is being made and Tibetan democratic ideas and practices continues to develop and evolve. A key part of these transformations, and indeed the important expansion of democracy beyond the institutions of government, has been the development of Tibetan civil society in exile through the increasing influence of Tibetan NGOs (see Chapter 6), and the growing sophistication and prominence of independent Tibetan media. With regards to the latter, Tibetan and English language newspapers, magazines, websites and radio services are increasingly acting as a watchdog on the Tibetan administration, providing a forum for political participation and contributing to increasingly lively political discussions. As Samphel notes:

> 'As a pillar of the exile body politik, the... transparency of the decisions and deliberations of the exile legislature through the exile media has enabled the refugee community to watch, gauge and understand the actions of their elected representatives and reserve their right to reward or punish the concerned deputies in the next elections' (2004: 184).

As such, rather than a prerequisite to democracy, the development of Tibetan civil society has occurred in reaction to and alongside the development of democratic institutions. This therefore supports Putnam's arguments that 'changes in formal institutions induce changes in political behaviour' (1993: 17) and that the development of social capital through a thriving third sector builds up the basic foundation for mutual trust and democratic practices.

8.2.4 Summary

In summary, I want to consider how this seemingly unique democratic transition and system relate to existing theories and models of democracy. Firstly, on an institutional level Tibetan democracy performs well with regards to Dahl's (2000) minimum criteria required for an entity to be democratic, albeit with the exception of political leaders competing for support. The TGiE has free, fair and frequent elections; a formal democratic structure with a balance of power among the three branches of government; inclusive citizenship with civil liberties institutionalised in the Constitution and Charter; and formal government accountability through the TPiE. However, as this chapter explores, contemporary exile Tibetan democracy remains in a democratic *transition* rather than a fully fledged

democracy, with the community continuing to 'struggle to interpret democratic values in the context of their own worldview and political circumstances' (Frechette 2007: 97). As such, following Cunningham (2002), it is perhaps more productive to conceive of democracy as a matter of degree of democratisation, rather than a strict democratic/non-democratic delineation.

Secondly, comparing exile Tibetan democracy directly to Western models of democracy, a key place to start is the range of approaches – from classical pluralism to structuralism and radical critiques of these ideas – which focus on a range of assumed preconditions for democracy. What is striking about the Tibetan case is that it appears to refute each of the preconditions that these schools of thought outline (see Table 8.i).[155]

Table 8.i: Comparison of assumed preconditions for democracy with the case of the Tibetan community-in-exile (based on Lipset 1959 and Cutright 1963).

Preconditions for transition to democracy	*Case of Tibetan community-in-exile in early 1960s*
Economic prosperity	Refugee population lacking funds and infrastructure
Social and political stability	Period of social and political upheaval and uncertainty
An educated population	Low literacy rates in the early years.
Widespread adherence to liberal and democratic values	No experience of democracy and emergence from a previously theocratic system
Prevalent urban residence	Large nomadic population and exile community was scattered in rural refugee camps

From such perspectives, the Tibetan case appears to be a deviation from Western norms. However, a copy of conventional Western liberal democracy is not the end goal of the exile Tibetan community and, if we employ a different frame of reference – Rustow's (1970) dynamic model of democratic transition – it is possible, and fruitful, to see Tibetan democracy as culturally particular and forging its own democratic path.[156] Crucially, in questioning the conflation of the primary causes

155 It is salient to note that the TGiE's host state of India is itself a significant outlier within comparative studies of democracy as, with high levels of poverty, a large rural population and low literacy levels, it also fails to meet the traditional pre-conditions of democracy (see Kolhi 2001).

156 With regards to Rustow's (1970) four-stage model the Tibetan case; (a) corroborates the common 'background condition' of national unity (discussed below), (b) lacks the inconclusive and prolonged political

and sustaining conditions of democracy, Rustow emphasises the dynamic process of democratic change. This therefore opens up conceptual space for considering democracy in societies which fail to currently meet such 'preconditions', nor are likely to meet them in the foreseeable future. Whilst not dismissing preconditions theory outright, as Anderson argues, this approach has 'liberated analysts and policy advocates from the confines of functional analysis and Western historical models' (1999: 1), and opened up the possibility of democracies taking root and thriving in different cultural and religious soils (Saward 2003). In addition, Rustow's approach allows for circumstances – in this case the act of the leader imposing democracy from above – which somehow persuade non-democrats to adopt democratic behaviour.

8.3 Elections in exile

'If Governments-in-exile are rich in one thing, it is symbolism'
(*The Economist*, 22 December 2001: 45)

A focus on Tibetan democracy therefore provides a valuable insight into the intersection of Tibetan culture, religion and politics, the emergence of Tibetan civil society in exile and the TGiE's strategies for legitimising its presence on the international stage. However, in order to probe the relationship between TGiE and its diasporic population, and examine the challenges raised by the administration's lack of contiguous territory, it is salient to turn attention to the mechanism through which modern democracy functions: electoral systems. As noted above, a range of elections are organised through the TGiE's Election Commission, but the focus of attention here is the elections to the TPiE which are held every five years. This is an electoral system innovatively designed by the political elite in order to serve a number of functions within the exile community and, as such, it offers a valuable insight not only into important structures and procedures of exile Tibetan democracy but also how TGiE perceives its role and function and its relationship with the diasporic population. As such, in asking how elections function in a polity without sovereignty over territory, this section focuses on the unusual structure of TPiE elections, the official narratives employed to justify this system and how these practices of democracy are perceived, debated and engaged with by a geographically differentiated electorate.

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struggle associated with the 'preparatory phase' due to the position and role of the Dalai Lama, (c) has experienced the gradual institutionalisation of democratic procedures characteristic of the 'decision phase', and (d) has arguably only just entered the 'habituation phase' where the elites retain their commitment to democratic procedures and the population at large engages with these new structures.

8.3.1 Voting by quota: the TPiE election system

Whilst all parliamentary election systems are shaped by and in turn reflect the specific characteristics and circumstances of the polity in question, there is a basic assumption that the national constituency will be divided into territorial units, and that the elected representatives will represent voters in their spatial constituency.[157] However, in the Tibetan case, democratic political representation does not reflect a territorial constituency's socio-economic structure as, instead, the parliament is organised according to a symbolic quota where the dominant categories are regional and religious affiliation in Tibet. As such, the current 43 member TPiE was elected in 2006 on the basis of three electoral formulas operating simultaneously.

The central element is a regional quota system whereby 30 MPs are elected by voters in India, Nepal and Bhutan to represent each of the three traditional provinces of Tibet: Ü-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. Representation is split equally with ten members elected from each region and voters exercise their franchise according to the region in Tibet that they are from. In the case of second or third generation exiles, they elect a representative from their parents' region, and, where parents are from different regions the child chooses which of these two regions to elect from. Candidates are put forward by regional associations which act as constituency interest groups rather than political parties. If elected, the supported candidates have no formal obligation to their regional association.

Secondly, the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism – Gelug, Kagyu, Sakya and Nyingma – and the traditional Bön faith each have two elected members in the TPiE. Only monks and nuns registered with monasteries in India, Nepal and Bhutan can vote for candidates from their religious denomination, which effectively entitles them to a second franchise, an important contradiction to the basic democratic ideal. Thirdly, to reflect the increasingly global Tibetan diaspora three MPs are elected by Tibetans living in the West. Voters in North America elect one representative and those in Europe elect two. These representatives are elected without reference to a particular province or sect, making this the only territorially-based constituency aspect of the parliamentary system. These 'constituencies' of Tibetan regions, Buddhist sects, Europe and North America are therefore based on a microcosm model of representation whereby the Tibetan

157 The notable exception to this are elections to the Israeli Knesset where the entire country constitutes a single electoral constituency.

community in exile and in Tibet is symbolically represented. Revoking convention, however, this microcosm model is not based on proportional representation, but rather on equal constituency representation through an engineered quota system. Neither the number of regional nor sectarian seats reflect the proportion of exile voters from each region and sect and, whilst not based on a symbolic quota, the election of candidates in the West is also not proportional to constituency size.[158] When questioned on the issues of proportional representation, double franchise for monks and nuns and lack of representation for Tibetans in East Asia and Australia, the Chief Election Commissioner offered no explanation other than that it was written in the Charter and so would remain policy until challenged through the Tibetan juridical system (16.03.2006).

8.3.2 Justifying the current electoral system: narratives of exile, homeland and unity.

Rather than being 'born kicking and screaming into the world out of a messy, incremental compromise between contending factions battling for survival, determined by power politics' (Norris 1995: 4 cited in Farrell 2001: 174), the TPiE election system was consciously designed by the political elite both to accommodate life in exile and to serve a number of wider functions for the diaspora. As such, the narratives offered to justify its quota systems provide a valuable insight into the role the Tibetan leadership perceive for TGiE within the exile community. From interviews with government officials and voters, three core and intertwined discourses emerged regarding the reasons for the creation of such highly symbolic electoral formulas: the restrictions faced by governing in exile; the forging of symbolic links with the homeland; and the unification of the Tibetan population both across exile and between exile and Tibet.

Most government officials began their explanations of the regional and religious quota systems by asserting that it was the situation of being in exile that had forced the decision-makers at the time to look beyond conventional electoral systems and develop their own model. As such, the symbolic constituencies were framed as a way to overcome the limitations of organising political representation in a diasporic community scattered over dispersed territories (Dawa, 27.02.2006).

158 Approximately 65% of the population in exile is from Ü-Tsang, 25% from Kham and 10% from Amdo, with 52% belonging to the Gelugpa sect, 22% to Nyigma, 13% Kagyu, 10% Sakya and 3% Bön (Anand 2000; Planning Council 2000). When the 1991 Charter was adopted, the Tibetan population in North America was around 1,000 and thus one representative was allocated. However, immigration to the US and Canada has increased dramatically, with the number of Tibetans residing there now numbering around 7,000. By contrast, the Tibetan population in Europe has remained relatively static, with 2,290 registered in the 1998 TDS. The North American MP has lobbied for an increase in the number of representatives but no move to do so has yet been seriously initiated.

This notion of symbolism is crucial. The quota of representatives from religious sects and the traditional regions of Tibet creates a system where the symbolic representation of Tibet, rather than the realities of life in exile, has formed the basis of the election system. On a pragmatic level, and echoing arguments made in Chapter 5, having symbolic rather than 'real' constituencies on Indian soil can be read as a strategy for avoiding confrontation with the Indian political system, although, somewhat surprisingly, this was a rationale rarely asserted by TGiE interviewees.

The inclusion of religious sects signifies the central role that religion has played in the Tibetan polity in the past, and ensures that the religious aspect of Tibetan life is represented within the exile parliament. In terms of the three regions this is both an articulation of Tibetan nationalism and a form of resistance to Chinese occupation. Notably these provinces follow the traditional (pre-1949) regional demarcation and is thus an assertion of Tibetan rights over the territory of Tibet as defined on their own terms (see Chapter 3). As such, the electoral system offers an alternative geo-political vision to today's Chinese-governed Tibet. This is a strategy which, following Reisman (1991), is essential to the 'government-in-exile technique' whereby the exiled administration is constantly conceptualised in relation to and in contradiction of the government-*in-situ*. Thus, as several interviewees stressed, the inclusion of all three regions symbolises a united Tibetan nation and, consequently, the TGiE is constructed as the representative body of *all* Tibetans:

> 'traditional regions means we are loyal to all of Tibet. Our government, it has to symbolically represent all of Tibet – from the very west to the very east... and the regional system, it is a strong form of symbolism' (Legdup, 04.11.2007),
>
> 'you can look around the Assembly room and see people from all corners of our nation ... it links us with our history ... We have to keep this link so when we can go back to Tibet we have this mentality of the three regions – the whole of Tibet' (Rigzin, 22.02.2007).

Through the TPiE, therefore, the exile constituency votes for its stake in the homeland and to articulate its Tibetan identity, with election system functioning as a political tool to formalise the diaspora's link with Tibet. Following Mach's observation that 'communities which have lost their land preserve their landscapes in the cultural memory... where land becomes idealised and its regaining is the major goal and duty' (1993: 174), the electoral system therefore reinforces a sense of the temporariness of exile and the 'inevitable' return to Tibet. Indeed, a number

of voters mentioned how the regional system kept them 'thinking about Tibet'. Moreover, reifying the homeland within the heart of the exile political structure emphasises the nationalist conception of territory as the basis for the construction of political identity, especially in the case of second and third generations in exile. This symbolic territorial aspect therefore highlights a key tension at the heart of Tibetan democracy. On the one hand, democracy is employed as an unconventional means of strategically linking the exile population with the homeland and training them for political life in future Tibet. On the other hand, the election system and democracy generally is intended to be a mechanism for governance in a conventional and instrumental sense within the time and space of exile.

The third discourse is that of unification of the Tibetan population. Within exile, equal representation from the three regions is seen as a key way of maintaining a strategic regional balance and preventing community fragmentation. As indicated earlier, the *realpolitik* need for an external display of Tibetan unison against the Chinese government means that a social norm of unity pervades Tibetan politics in exile and, as a number of government officials argued, is exemplified in the TPiE election system. The narrative of unity is also articulated in terms of bringing together the population in the homeland with the diaspora. As the Vice-Chair of the Parliament explained:

> 'There was debate in the 11th house about whether we should continue with the system or not but finally we decided that it is important for us to keep it principally because of one reason – we want a Tibetan parliament-in-exile not a parliament of Tibetans-in-exile. If we had a system which was done only by people living here in exile and with no link to Tibetan people living inside Tibet then that wouldn't be correct. Therefore... and so we felt it important that we keep it... not the territory as in exile but our territory in free independent Tibet' (29.04.2006).

Therefore, while Tibetans in Tibet cannot vote in the parliamentary elections, they are represented by proxy by the regional MPs. This symbolic representation of an otherwise disconnected population is also a strategy through which TGiE constructs its claim that it represents, and thus is conferred with legitimacy by Tibetans both in exile and in Tibet.

In summary, therefore, it can be seen that the Tibetan parliamentary electoral system is not simply a mechanism for conducting elections. Instead, it was designed to play an active role in shaping the political consciousness and identity of the diaspora. It forges a symbolic link with the homeland, uniting the electorate

under a banner of Tibetan nationalism, and creating a strategically balanced microcosm of the community-in-exile. In light of which, the electoral system, and Tibetan democracy more generally, are often oriented more towards the past and the future rather than the lived realities of present-day exile; a situation which, as explored below, raises a number of practical and ideological difficulties.

8.3.3 Limitations of the exile parliamentary election system: accountability, division and apathy

Examining the functioning of the parliamentary elections 'from below,' it became readily apparent during interviews with the Tibetan electorate in the settlements across India that the operation of a symbolic electoral system in a diaspora of real voters with local, grounded issues inevitably creates problems and tensions. Criticism of this aspect of the system revolved around three inter-related narratives: the fact that representatives were accountable neither to 'real' constituencies nor to political parties with manifesto promises; the perception that the system perpetuates divisive regionalism and creates identities which do not reflect the reality of 'modern' exiled Tibetans; and, finally, that such detachment leads to political apathy. Significantly, the articulation of these critiques of the electoral system had a distinct spatial dimension, with a marked division between Dharamsala and the settlements.

As Tsomo (2004) points out, the issue of accountability is debated in every liberal democracy, but the issue is further complicated in the Tibetan case due to this being a partyless system. Crucially, the fact that MPs do not commit themselves to any particular line of action means that there exists no basis upon which the electorate can hold them accountable once in power (Sherab, 25.03.2006). The symbolic dimension of the regional system has also led to considerable criticism regarding accountability, especially among those born in exile who are increasingly questioning of the role that representatives actually play for their region or sect. As a college student in Bangalore expressed it:

> 'If I vote for MPs then how are they accountable to me – answer me how? For they represent this half-real place of Kham – where I'm from – but what can they ever do in Kham? Sure it is occupied by the Chinese! But then, if I am in South [settlements in South India] and I have some problem with Indian police, then my MP cannot help me because their constituency is in Kham!' (Migmar, 04.12.2007).

Such frustrations point to a significant challenge faced by the lack of 'real' territorial constituencies in exile. The fact that individuals from the three regions

in Tibet and the five religious sects are generally scattered in exile means that the effective 'constituency' of any one elected representative is dispersed over settlements in India and Nepal. This lack of a fixed spatial district has, unsurprisingly, led to a significant communication gap and lack of accountability between MPs and their constituents. Moreover, the issues faced by the majority of 'ordinary' Tibetans based in the exile settlements often fail to be represented within the parliament due to the fact that most MPs reside in Dharamsala and, with specific needs of different settlements in exile thus not being effectively addressed by the current electoral system, this leads to a disenfranchising of voters from the political process. As a farmer in Sonamling explained:

> 'Each Tibetan settlement in India, it has different problems and issues – for some it is high unemployment, for some drugs or alcohol abuse, conflict with Indians. Here our problems are with water shortage, infrastructure and [being] so remote... but if most MPs they are living in Dharamsala, then these issues they don't come in our parliament' (Woser, 20.05. 2007).[159]

One explanation for such an over-representation of Dharamsala-based MPs within the parliament (12 out of 30 in the current assembly) is that voters see 'residency' listed as Dharamsala, associate this with the Dalai Lama and TGiE and therefore vote for that individual (Bhuchung, 26.02.2006). This therefore highlights an important spatial dimension of the election process which echoes the core-periphery relationship between TGiE and the settlements as outlined in Chapter 5. Democratic ideals, policies and practices are 'created' in Dharamsala and rolled out to the settlements where they sometimes receive a less than enthusiastic reception. This predictably varies across the settlements, with those established independently of TGiE such as Clementown being more resistant to the implementation of democratic reforms compared to TGiE-run settlements such as the Dekyiling where, notably, voter turnout is considerably higher (Jetsan, 16.04.2007).

Regionalism is also deeply ingrained in the exile community and, whilst in many ways a result of the persistence of pre-1959 forms of religious and social organisation (Shakabpa 1967; Chapter 6), there is a strong argument that the symbolic constituencies of the current voting system perpetuate social cleavages within the Tibetan diaspora. A microcosm of the homeland in exile is created, but it

159 Besides Ladakh, Tibetans living in South India are under-represented in the TPiE (29,000 Tibetans in Karnataka have only 3 *Chitues*) and those living in remote settlements in NE India (around 7,000 Tibetans in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Nagaland) have no representative in the present parliament (Planning Council 2000).

is a microcosm emphasising regional and religious differences. As a monk from Kirti monastery in Dharamsala explained:

> 'the electoral system just serves to divide people. Candidates when they are campaigning they highlight regional differences and the real issue of future of Tibet and Tibetan struggle is forgotten but... if we divide ourselves this provides a platform for the Chinese to rule us more' (Gadong, 18.03.2006).

Such assertions that the current electoral system perpetuates the Chinese 'divide-and-rule' policy and undermines a united freedom movement thus directly challenges the narratives justifying the system outlined above. Criticism is also levelled at the continued close relationship between religion and politics within TGiE, with the increasingly secular youth arguing that the persistence of seats for the religious sects and a double franchise for monks and nuns runs counter to the basic democratic ideal of 'one man one vote'. Thus, whilst Tibetan political leaders seem acutely aware of the 'problems of sectarian and regional prejudices' and indeed 'call on all Tibetans to remain alert to the dangers of regionalism' (Samdhong Rinpoche cited in *Tibetan Bulletin* 2001 5(4): 25), their loyalty to and promotion of the current electoral system, appears contradictory. The strategy of integrating and unifying the community in exile through differentiation of the electorate along symbolic regional and religious lines appears to be faltering, if not having the completely opposite effect.

Finally, whilst regional classifications may have reinforced latent regional identities for older generations and recent refugees from Tibet, the majority of those born in exile have little affiliation to a region in Tibet or much sense of regional identity. As an older café owner in Dharamsala put it, 'my son and daughter were born in Yol[160] and Delhi ... to which region do they belong? The current system is meaningless' (Rinchen, 15.03.2007). Therefore, the imposition of a symbolic and in many ways alien notion of territorial identity onto a 'real' political community whose territorial affiliations lie in exile has had significant implications. On the one hand, younger Tibetans are attempting to negotiate new, non-regional identities, as Tsundue argued in *Tibetan Review*:

> 'Tibetan youngsters are choosing to steer clear from such [regional] typecasting. This is the new generation emerging with its own sense of identity. They have seen such categorisation resulting in communal fundamentalism. The challenge is to know one's own parental and cultural roots, and yet not fall into the trap of clannish groupism, which has stifled

160 An Indian village several miles south of Dharamsala which has a number of exile Tibetan institutions nearby such as the Norbulinka cultural centre and Gyuto monastery.

> Tibetan parliamentarian politics. This is the fine balance I believe our youngsters must maintain to take the community forward' (2004: 19).

On the other hand, this lack of connection to traditional Tibetan regions was also one of the reasons cited for the increasing problem of voter apathy among 'the youth'.[161] Whilst this trend appears to have been reversed to some extent in the 2006 parliamentary elections (discussed below), a number of younger respondents declared a detachment from and disinterest in the elections. Such voter apathy can be attributed to a number of systemic problems within Tibetan democracy, and indeed citizenship:

> 'With the elections here there is not so much interest. Our people, they have engaged with the rights and privileges of citizenship and democratic politics, but they are ignorant for [sic] the corresponding responsibilities.... There is no ideology, no politics in the Tibetan community. You ask most people what they think about the elections and politics and they will have no opinion – they have nothing to say. People here, they have little politics – they just want leadership from the Dalai Lama' (Taklha, 13.03.2006).

Again, the spatiality of the exile community is important here. My Dharamsala-based interviewees perceived the settlements as politically apathetic, detached from and ignorant of political developments within the TGiE. From the opposite perspective, many interviewees in the settlements complained of a lack of information regarding candidates standing for election and a general disengagement from the everyday functioning of the exile government. The distance between the settlements and Dharamsala can therefore be seen to exist both materially – in terms of remoteness and inaccessibility – and in the political imagination:

> 'In places like here [Sonamling] people, especially young people, they don't know anything about the candidates. There is very little campaigning, so when you are choosing candidates it is just a list of names. Some of older people might recognise the names but for the youth there is no connection... and for us we think it is not so important these elections, for us our studies and our job are important, not what happens in Dharamsala' (Khenpo, 18.05.2007).

My interviews also revealed two other important cohorts who, to a greater or lesser extent, feel disenfranchised from exile politics. The first are newcomer refugees who, with few connections in exile and certainly no experience of participatory politics, struggle to comprehend or engage with TPiE elections. The second group

161 In a 2005 *Tibetan World Magazine* survey of 150 Tibetans aged 18-25, 70% claimed they did not vote, 69% knew nothing about the preliminary round of voting in September 2005 and 60% claimed their knowledge about democracy and Tibetan electoral system was 'poor' (*TWM* August 2005: 18).

are Tibetans in the West. Whilst the fact that these individuals are able to vote for a conventionally territorial representative can be read as an implicit assumption that Tibetans in the West are more educated and politically aware (Director, TCHRD, 25.03.2006), the distance of such voters from the exile government and their lack of contact with TGiE administrative structures and welfare services means that there is considerable apathy. As the Chairman of the Tibetan Community in Britain asserted:

> 'There has been very little interest in the elections in the UK. Our people here don't see it as relevant to their lives. It's not a priority and our election officials here are really struggling. So far I think very few people have registered [and are therefore eligible to vote]. Tibetans in the West... often we feel disenfranchised from our government... often there is not so much communication on either side' (11.02.2006).

Over the years such disillusionment and frustration with the electoral system has instigated the sketching out of alternative systems by various interest groups and individuals, including the Dalai Lama himself. One option, proposed by the TYC in 1974 but never implemented, would retain representatives from the three regions but every citizen in exile would have the right to vote for any candidate, irrespective of regional affiliations. Secondly, petitions for a multi-party system in exile are a continuing, if currently less vocalised, theme in Tibetan political discussions (TCHRD 2000). Finally, the most popular, and arguably most viable alternative election system is a proposal for a two-tier system with an upper house with members from regions and religious sects and a lower house with members representing constituencies in exile and based on proportional representation. Similar to proposals put forward in the 'Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity' (1992), proponents of this option stressed that it would reflect more accurately the geographical and political reality of the exiled population and thereby increase political accountability and participation. This therefore appears to be indicating a desire for more conventional electoral system of territorially-defined constituencies which enables local issues to be addressed, an assertion supported by Johnston and Pattie's claim that local constituencies are 'salient elements in the structuration of local political activity' (2003: 348).

Although not seriously considered to date at the governmental level – due both to a reluctance to change the system and pressure from Kham and Amdo constituencies to retain the current regional quotas – it is worth briefly speculating what the implications would be of adopting a more conventional system of local

territorialised politics. Such a scenario links directly into a series of fundamental dilemmas and contradictions at the core of the Tibetan exile experience and the purpose. Central to this is the dilemma between meeting immediate needs and thus becoming increasingly 'permanent' in exile, and retaining the strong emotional and political desire to return home by maintaining a sense of restlessness whilst in exile (see Chapter 5).

At first glance, the current system appears to create a 'permanent sense of temporariness' while the alternative system seems to compound trends towards increasing permanence by rooting political representation in locations in exile. In addition, it is arguable that the alternative system would shift Tibetan diasporic identity to one based on an individual's location in exile rather than on a collective sense of 'Tibetanness'. However, it could equally be asserted that the current system has an unsettling effect on identity, situating it in a symbolic no-man's-land rather than a 'real' territorial realm, while the alternative system consolidates connections between exile Tibetans and the political structures of TGiE and therefore strengthens the freedom struggle. In general, therefore, whilst calls for exile-based territoriality within the electoral system appear at face-value to equate with a shift towards welfarism over politicisation, individual needs over societal imperatives and permanence in exile over temporariness in expectation of 'return', such an intuitive reading of these debates obscures important complexities and ambiguities. Instead, the contradictions brought to light by an analytical focus on the electoral system goes some way to challenging the bifurcated image so often constructed of exiles, and gives a valuable insight into their complex negotiations of identity, territory and political representation.

8.3.4 Summary

I want to conclude this discussion of Tibetan parliamentary elections by remaining with issues of identity and territory. With regards to the structural features and fractures of the electoral system, a key theme which has emerged is the attempted integration of the exile community through differentiating it along regional and religious lines whereby different 'categories' of people are assigned to different electoral formulas and even different numbers of votes. The outcomes of this in terms of perceived perpetuation of regionalism and the disengagement of many young Tibetans has sparked heated debates in exile which strike at the heart of the nature and form of both Tibetan democracy and the exile community. Significantly, the two sides of the argument highlighted here – the official government line and

the views put forward by younger Tibetans – both see the election system as a potentially unifying force within the exiled community but, whilst both face the same fundamental challenge of (non)territorial constituencies, their (actualised and proposed) resolutions are very different.

Turning to issues of territory, the system of symbolic quotas functions as TGiE's way of 'creating' territorial constituencies, albeit contradictory constituencies where representatives have no jurisdiction over the people living in the territory that they 'represent' (regions in Tibet), but do have a constituency of voters scattered across India and Nepal. As such, alongside the 'real' territory of the exile Tibetan settlements, 'the notion of territory exists in the imagination and simultaneously in the past and the future – in "old" Tibet and "free" Tibet' (Ardley 2003b: 351). This unusual relationship between democracy and territory speaks to broader debates in democracy literature in interesting ways. Whilst supporting the argument that territory is crucial to the form and operation of democracy, the case of exile Tibetan democracy refutes Dahl's (2000) assertions regarding the necessary territorialisation of democracy, as this case illustrates a democracy functioning alongside de-territorialising processes (see Chapter 5). In ongoing discussions regarding how democracy is and should be responding to globalisation and the associated rethinking of (political) territory, two models have been posited: Archibugi *et al*'s (1998) notion of cosmopolitan democracy whereby democracy is deepening and extending across global networks; and Hirst's (1993) model of associational democracy operating at the level of regions and cities. Tibetan democracy's complex articulation of space can be seen to lie between and across these models, and is a key example of a functioning transnational and diasporic democracy. Therefore, suggesting that the relationship between geographical scale and democracy needs to be re-imagined, the Tibetan case raises pertinent questions about the stretching of political authority and participation beyond 'national' frontiers, and how this affects issues of legitimacy, constituency, participation and the meaning of representation.

8.4 The 'youth factor' in the 2006 TPiE elections

In this final section, I want to illustrate and literally 'put a face' to the above discussion regarding the nature of Tibetan democracy and the structure TPiE elections. While the discursive analyses presented above are necessary for understanding the complex functioning and important limitations of this case, such

an approach fails to capture the fact that democracy is an inherently dynamic, complex and participatory process, and voting is a key moment of encounter between the individual and the state. In order to attempt to offer such an insight, I want to provide an ethnographic snapshot of the 2006 elections to the TPiE. These elections were notable for an increase in voter turnout compared to previous parliamentary elections,[162] and saw important attempts to instigate new political discourses, alter voting behaviour and radicalise the composition of the parliament. Key to this trend, and indeed the buzzword of the 2006 elections, was the 'youth factor' and the driving force behind this was a coalition of politically active young Tibetans – from a variety of backgrounds although overwhelmingly male, lay and born in exile – who called their activities 'Youth for Better MPs'. In the run up to the TPiE elections on 18 March 2006 I spent considerable time with this group, sitting in on their meetings, chatting to individuals and groups of those involved, joining them as they campaigned in Dharamsala, meeting up with them on polling day and asking others what their reaction to the group was. Therefore, whilst what follows is to a large extent a one-sided account of this period – my engagement with other interest groups such as regional associations was limited – I hope it offers an insight to what was an important political episode.

Following arguments made in Chapter 4, in order to both present the ideas and strategies of this youth coalition and provide a 'feel' for the election process, the following is a montage of field notes, excerpts from interviews and discussion groups, press articles, photographs and election posters, presented in the order I encountered, initiated and recorded them. In light of Crang's argument that the use of pictures and research materials in montage forces us to consider the interrelations between different kinds of evidence (2005: 230), these research records build up a narrative of the intense 12 days running up to the TPiE elections, giving a sense of the rush of electioneering and contextualising a number of the issues outlined above.

6th March 2006: 'Youth for Better MPs' meeting

Attending the main 'Youth for Better MPs' meeting ahead of the final round of voting, I made the following observations in my field diary:

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162 The number of registered voters for the 2006 TPiE election – 82,231 – saw an increase of 15% from the previous election in 2001 and the turnout for the preliminary round was 80%, compared to 60% in 2001 (*Tribune India*, 11 September 2005).

6 March 2006:
12 young Tibetans present – 10 men, 2 women, all in their 20s–30s. Occupations include TCV teacher, secretary at Men-tse-khang, teacher at Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, political activists associated with Students for a Free Tibet, Regional TYC, Friends of Tibet, shopkeeper, nurse, secretary at Geden Choeling nunnery. Sonam translating for me.

Aim of the meeting is to draw up a shortlist of candidates that they will promote for the final poll. They had compiled a list for the preliminary round in September. Each nominated candidate from the primary round is discussed in turn regarding whether they should be supported. Some are dismissed outright, others automatically put on the list with a unanimous show of hands but some provoke a lot of discussion. Individuals argue their case – try to persuade others and, if opinion is split, there's a show of hands. Important factors in selecting candidates seem to be which exile organisations/institutions they had been involved with, whether they are pro-independence, and what the group think of their 'character'. Most candidates nominated are based in Dharamsala – they obviously have links with/ worked for NGOs etc, but are also known personally – people know their political views, they have done favours for/ worked with the organisations represented in the room. The point is made several times that the group's aims are to educate the voters and to get the 'right' people in government – people who are 'young, active and educated' and have 'sincerity for their dedication for Tibet.' In contrast, many incumbent MPs are portrayed as sectarian, poorly educated and wanting the position for the power and influence rather than progressing the Tibetan cause.

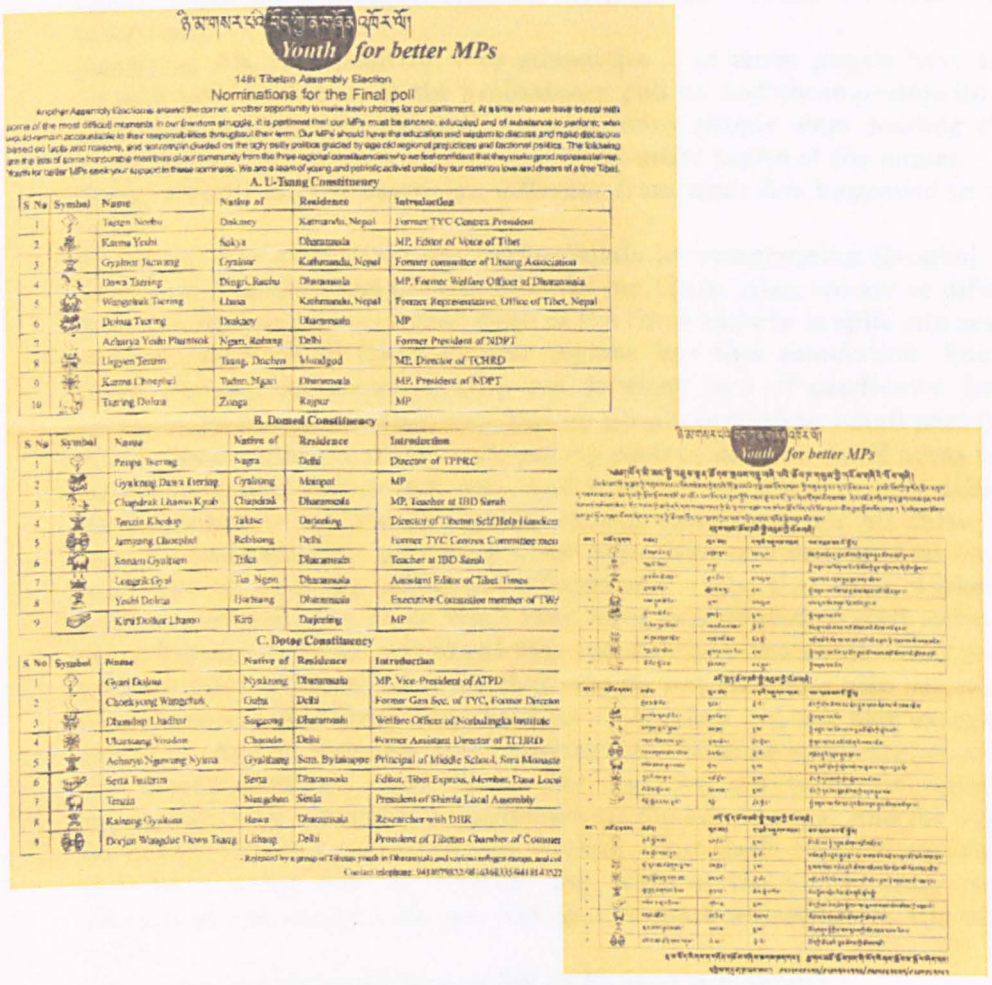
*Having come from chatting with Gonpo [*a nun who had been a political prisoner in Tibet and came to exile 12 years ago*] to sitting in on this meeting feels like two different worlds – completely different views on life in exile and Tibetan politics. Also reminds me of conversations with Khedup [*who had escaped into exile in the mid 1990s*] and his view that the government is far too dominated by Tibetans from India. To what extent are the views expressed in this discussion shaped by being second generation? – not understanding the different mindset of Tibetans from Tibet – i.e. those older MPs who were being criticised? To what extent is this organisation part of the creation of a political class?*

Two important issues are worth noting from these jottings. The first is the contrast between newcomer refugees and those born in exile, an issue which reinforces assertions made above regarding the alienation of recent arrivals from TGiE and the election process more specifically. As noted in Chapter 6, the division between these cohorts is a significant challenge facing the community and, despite their talk of progressive politics, the youth coalition appear to be perpetuating this schism. Secondly, the group's promotion of 'pro-independence' candidates is key. Not only central to the rationale of their campaign (and their politics more generally), this political stance forms part of a broader movement within sections of the exile community to promote a *rangzen* agenda within the TGiE itself in opposition to the current 'Middle Way' policy (see Chapter 3). Whilst a '*Rangzen*

Party' is not (yet) on the agenda, such discussions can be read as an important shift towards party-style politics and the development of political ideologies within the community.

8th March 2006: Producing campaign posters

The outcome of this meeting was the drawing up of lists of candidates for the final poll which, two days later, was printed in the form of these posters:[163]



Youth for better MPs

14th Tibetan Assembly Election

Nominations for the Final poll

A. U-Tsang Constituency

S. No	Symbol	Name	Native of	Residence	Introduction
1		Tsetan Norbu	Dolkaey	Katmandu, Nepal	Former TYC Centres President
2		Karma Yeshi	Sakya	Dharamsala	MP, Editor of Voice of Tibet
3		Gyaltsen Tsewang	Gyalrong	Kathmandu, Nepal	Former committee of Utsang Association
4		Dawa Tsering	Dingri, Rasthu	Dharamsala	MP, Former Welfare Officer of Dharamsala
5		Wangchuk Tsering	Lhasa	Kathmandu, Nepal	Former Representative, Office of Tibet, Nepal
6		Dolma Tsering	Dolkaey	Dharamsala	MP
7		Acharya Yeshi Phuntsok	Ngari, Rutsang	Delhi	Former President of NDPT
8		Lhagyen Jamyn	Tsang, Dochen	Mundgod	ME, Director of TCHRD
9		Karma Choephel	Tsethen, Ngari	Dharamsala	MP, President of NDPT
10		Tsering Dolma	Zonga	Raipur	MP

B. Domed Constituency

S. No	Symbol	Name	Native of	Residence	Introduction
1		Penpa Tsering	Nagra	Delhi	Director of TPPRC
2		Gyalrong Dawa Tsering	Gyalrong	Manipal	MP
3		Chapdrak Lhamo Kyab	Chapdrak	Dharamsala	MP, Teacher at IBD Sarah
4		Tenzin Khedup	Taktse	Darjeeling	Director of Tibetan Self Help Handicra
5		Jampyang Choephel	Rebkong	Delhi	Former TYC Canvass Committee mem
6		Konam Gyaltsen	Trika	Dharamsala	Teacher at IBD Sarah
7		Lungrik Gyal	Tso Ngon	Dharamsala	Assistant Editor of Tibet Times
8		Yeshi Dolma	Hortsang	Dharamsala	Executive Committee member of TW
9		Kirti Dolkar Lhamo	Kirti	Darjeeling	MP

C. Dotoe Constituency

S. No	Symbol	Name	Native of	Residence	Introduction
1		Gyari Dolma	Nyaktong	Dharamsala	MP, Vice-President of ATPD
2		Choekyong Wangchuk	Golok	Delhi	Former Gen Sec. of TYC, Former Directo
3		Dhondup Lhadhar	Sogcong	Dharamsala	Welfare Officer of Norbulingka Institute
4		Ukartsang Yeodon	Chamdo	Delhi	Former Assistant Director of TCHRD
5		Acharya Ngawang Nyima	Gyalthang	Sera, Byalakuppe	Principal of Middle School, Sera Monaste
6		Serta Tsultrim	Serta	Dharamsala	Editor, Tibet Express, Member, Dasa Local
7		Tenzin	Nangchen	Simla	President of Shimla Local Assembly
8		Kalsang Gyaltsen	Hawa	Dharamsala	Researcher with DIIR
9		Dorjee Wangdue Tsewa Tsang	Lithang	Delhi	President of Tibetan Chamber of Commer

Making an explicit link between the role of MPs and the freedom struggle, the posters outline the characteristics the group believes MPs should have – sincerity, education, substance, accountability – and positions this coalition strongly against the 'ugly petty politics guided by age old regional prejudices and factional politics'. Significantly, this is in opposition to factional politics rather than to the structure of the election system itself.

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163 Following the Indian election system 'symbols' are connected to each candidate to facilitate voting by illiterate members of the electorate. *Domed* and *Dotoe* refer to Amdo and Kham regions respectively.

9th March 2006: Interview with Ngawang

I interview Ngawang, one of the self-appointed leaders of the 'Youth for Better MPs' group and a prominent and often controversial political figure in exile, in a Tibetan café in Dharamsala. We discuss why the coalition was established, how they were going to organise their campaign and how their efforts had been received thus far:

> Fiona: what have people's reaction been to the 'Youth for Better MPs' campaign?
> Ngawang: Ah, very positive, very supportive... so many people have taken an interest. Coming up to the preliminary poll we had these posters all over Dharamsala [gestures widely]... and so many people were reading them, some taking them off the wall so they could make copies of the names!
> Fiona: so how is your campaign different from what has happened in other years?
> Ngawang: For a start we are professionals at campaigning [laughs]... we design good posters and get the message out there. Also, we are so different from the regional associations. Each of the three regions is split into smaller regions and each of these smaller regions has this association. You see, these regional associations, they put forward lists of candidates for the preliminary round, but they only put up people from their small part of one of the three regions and they only put up posters in some small areas where people from that region they live. And what we are doing is very different, very different – we are listing our chosen candidates for all three main regions, and putting it all on the same page. Nice and simple. And for each candidate we give the important information – who they have worked for, what experience they have, what they have contributed to civil society. So every Tibetan in India and Nepal they can see the same sheet – they can see who we have recommended for their region but they can also see who we have recommended from other regions – and they can see how everyone is qualified. And so they can stop thinking only of their small region and see the bigger picture.... And so in this way we are trying to unite this community – by uniting the candidates on the single page! And for our lists we have 2 versions – Tibetan and English – but these regional associations they have a list only in Tibetan, but some of the youth, their reading Tibetan is not so good. So our list is... is more accessible to the modern youth.
> Fiona: how did the prelimary round go for your campaign?
> Ngawang: Now for the preliminaries we mainly concentrated our posters in Himachal [Pradesh] and Delhi, but for the final poll... for this we are going to have these posters all over India and Nepal. And for this we are going to use our network of activists. So I will send batches of posters by bus to Delhi and they will be collected and sent with someone going by bus to Kathmandu, and to Bangalore and so forth. And this way we will cover all the settlements. For you see it is very important that it reaches everyone, especially those common people who are not so well educated. Because if they don't have list of names, who are they going to vote for? – they don't know these candidates. It is these people in the settlements who are the main vote banks you see and so it is important that we reach them.

As indicated in this interview extract, the group aimed to establish themselves as distinct from and an alternative to the regional associations, perceiving themselves as representing 'modern' young Tibetans in contrast to the traditional values represented by the regional groups. In addition, it is instructive to chart how their belief in and promotion of a united 'Tibetan' community in exile (albeit only in India and Nepal) is mobilised and realised both through their political strategies of including all three regions on one poster and distributing the posters widely across the settlements. As such, this network of youth activists indicates a very different imagined geography from both the regional associations and the electoral system itself. It is a geography based on shared political aspirations (for Tibetan independence) and on long-distance communication, rather than on face to face contact and a shared 'clan' history.

11th March 2006: New media and the emergence of political debate

In doing some background research on the 'Youth for Better MPs' group, I find they caught the attention of the Indian press during the preliminary round, with an article appearing in the *Hindustan Times* on 8 September 2005 outlining key differences between the youth coalition and regional associations. When posted on phayul.com, which has become the main online discussion and debating forum for exile Tibetan politics, this article generated a number of comments from young Tibetans across the diaspora. Those presented below illustrate a range of views about the 'Youth' campaign and reflect a number of the narratives critical of the election system discussed above: from demanding more radical changes and challenging the system itself, to calls for the establishment of political parties and finally opposition to any change in the equal electoral representation of Tibetan regions.

> Location: Dasa [Dharamsala]
> Sep 08 2005 01:49 PM
> [...] youngsters, we are in exile we dont have regions. all we have is the scattered settlements, so the seat for election should be based on settlements for better representation. and yes two votes for monks and one vote for lay people is all discrimination of political rights [...]

> Location: nalandaanda [Bihar, India]
> Sep 08 2005 12:35 PM
> Congratulations for graduating to a sensible, responsible Tibetans. Idea is good but it would have been excellent if these very peole [*sic*] whose names has been suggested, formed a Tibetan Freedom Party. That would have sent the right signals and touched each and every sensible, responsible Tibetans who want to fight only for the FREEDOM OF TIBET.

Location: UK
Sep 08 2005 01:32 AM
Glad to know that some of our younger folks have realized that sectarianism and regionalism have hurt us and slowed us down and are making efforts to break out of this mold. [...] And like many who expressed their opinion on this site it is time for change and the ultimate goal is One United Tibet for All Tibetans.

Location: Paris
Sep 07 2005 08:13 PM
Tib Youth's attempts to replace regional representation by open election to Exiled Parliament is nothing new and betrays the sinister design of majority Utsangwas in exile to dominate the Tibetan parliament in exile... If the Tibetan Parliament is to represent the whole of Tibetan people in and outside Tibet, then regional and religious representation cannot be done away with in the foreseeable future...
(www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=10602&t=1&c=1)

Such online discussion forums constitute an increasingly important space for political debate, and have been key to connecting the globally dispersed electorate. Two other innovative media initiatives for engaging the younger generation with exile politics are worth mentioning. The first was Radio Free Asia's live election broadcasts which included constituency hustings and a town hall discussion with all candidates, the latter of which was filmed and copies distributed to the settlements (RFA, 8 March 2006). Secondly, several members of the 'Youth for Better MPs' group were involved in producing a 15-minute information film about the importance of voting which was widely distributed across settlements in India and Nepal and broadcast several times on Dharamsala cable TV (Tsultrim, 09.03.2006). Aimed at encouraging youth participation in politics, the film featured interviews with the key players in the election process – the Election Commissioner, *Kalon Tripa*, presidents of NDPT and TWA and prospective candidates. Indeed, this film, and the activities of the youth coalition more generally, formed part of a wider movement to attempt to engender a more engaged sense of citizenship through greater voter responsibility.

15th March 2006: Election campaigning around Dharamsala

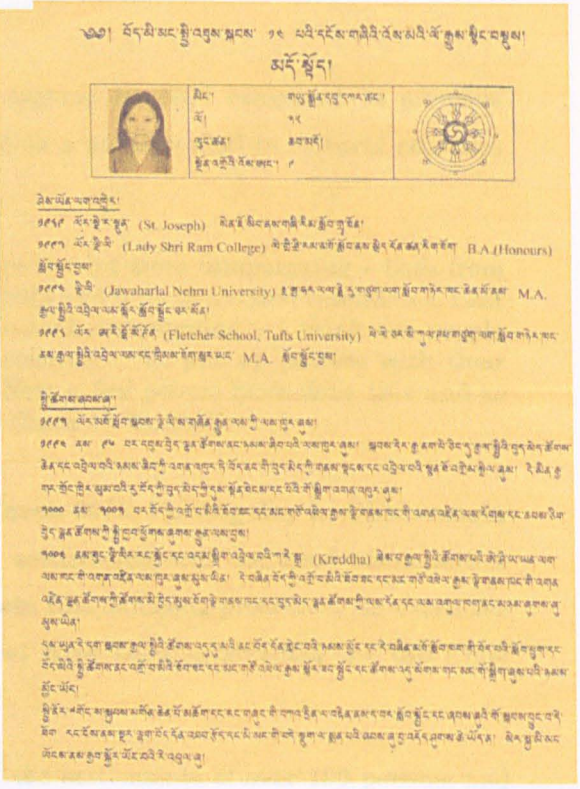
Whilst these media innovations are increasingly important in providing a forum for exile political debate, the majority of campaigning is still carried out through the more traditional medium of posters displayed in Tibetan settlements. Although the Election Commission pastes posters of each candidate in public places in each settlement – verified with the TGiE stamp and signature of the local electoral officer – it is down to each individual candidate to campaign for themselves in the

form of posters, adverts in the exile Tibetan press and, in some cases, shouting slogans from the back of jeeps being driven around the streets of Dharamsala.

[Left] Members of the Tibetan electorate examining candidate posters on Temple Road, Dharamsala. This was one of two sites in the town where the Welfare Office pasted official campaign posters.

[Below] Campaign poster for a candidate running for a seat in the Amdo constituency

However, as indicated above, interest groups such as regional associations, NGOs and the youth coalition increasingly campaigned on behalf of selected candidates. This again took the form of lists of candidates being pasted in the settlements and advertised on websites such as phayul.com. As I noted in my field diary three days before the election:



15th March 2006

*Electioneering seems to be stepping up a gear. The campaign is being fought on the walls of Dharamsala – teams from different interest groups head out at night with posters and paste, and effectively wallpaper the town. As well as 'Youth for Better MPs', the most active other group is Chushi Gangdruk [*representing Kham region*] but posters from NDPT, Todue welfare association, Ngari Chilthum Association and posters of individual candidates have also appeared in the last couple of days. With the internal problems at TYC over the winter they haven't put out a list, but chatting to the acting president he thought their list would have been pretty similar to that of the Youth group. TWA doesn't publish a list of candidates but, according to one MP, has definitely put people forward behind the scenes. So, with the low standing of NDPT at the moment it's really just the Youth group up against the regional associations and, according to Ngawaing, tensions are rising.*

[Left] 'Youth for Better MPs' posters on display outside the Tibetan Welfare Office in Dharamsala.

Following my enquiries into how campaigning in 2006 compared to previous elections, one TGiE civil servant reflected on a possible shift in cultural attitudes towards political promotion:

> 'I think compared to last time there is a lot more campaigning – both from the organisations putting up their lists and from individual candidates. Last time I can't remember much individual campaigning – I think our people find it very hard to promote themselves.... To put up posters with their photo saying how good they are! Now a few people have done this and so when some start others will follow' (Ketu 15.03.2006).

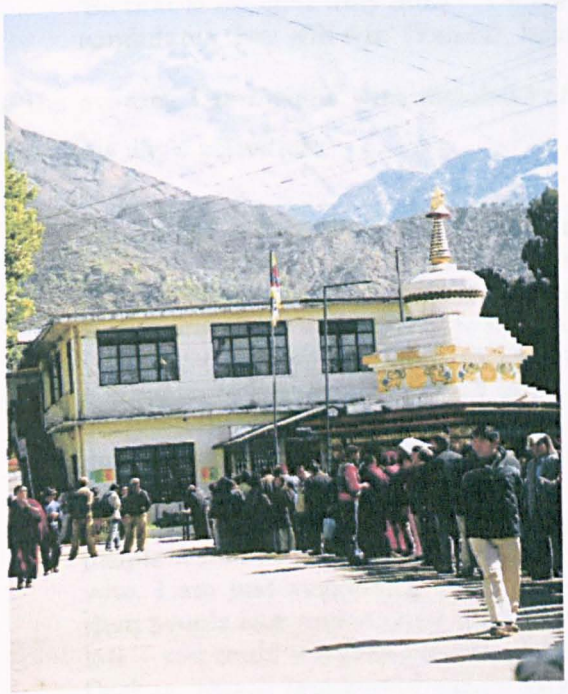
18th March 2006: Polling day in Dharamsala

Voting happens on one day in Tibetan settlements and scattered communities across the world and, in order to coordinate this daunting procedure, an extensive network of election offices and personnel have been established. As the Chief Election Commissioner explained;

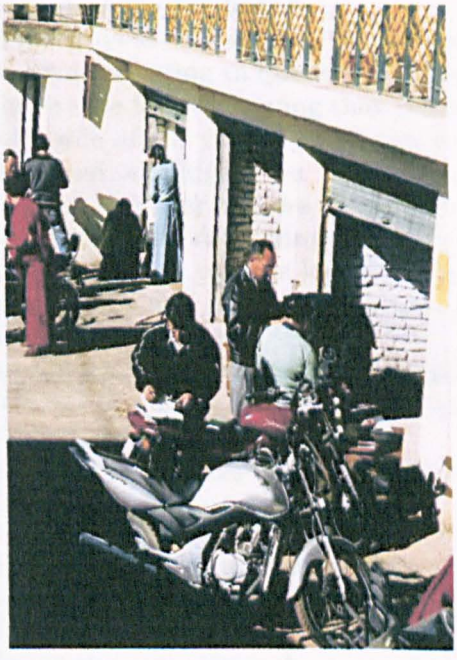
> 'We have 53 permanent offices in the settlements of over 160 persons and regional offices in the West and they organise everything – so the registration of names of the people, polling stations, counting the vote and

collating the vote and then they send the results here and we do the final counting and announcing the results.... Also at the local level they organise all the education about elections, voting, ballot papers. And with this it is a good way of building democracy at local levels' (16.03.2006).

In terms of the voting procedure, any Tibetan aged 18 and over and holding a Green Book with *chatrel* duly paid is eligible to vote, but must register with their local election commission in advance. Once registered and entered onto the Election Commission database, voters can cast their ballot at any Tibetan polling station – established in Tibetan schools, monasteries and welfare offices – which is an important accommodation of the highly mobile electorate. I spent the morning of the TPiE elections at the polling station at Gangchen Kyishong, the headquarters of TGiE, and noted the following in my field diary:



Three separate queues at the chorten in front of the parliament building – one for each region – with Ü-Tsang queue noticeably longer. There's a mixture of government staff, MPs, monks, nuns, lay people – old and young. Everyone queues up, presents their Green Book to the official at the desk who checks their name, then they move to another official who stamps and issues ballot papers – one for lay people and two for monks/nuns.



People then move to the side and fill in the forms – but it's not exactly a secret ballot. Two low tables with pens are left to one side, but few people use them. Instead, people fill out the forms on top of car bonnets, motorbike seats, some go into the garages under the Planning Commission. Some people look for privacy – one monk runs away from his friends and hides to make his ballot paper – others fill out the forms together. Voters then fold the ballot papers and post them into the ballot boxes – monitored by a Tibetan official. For much of the morning Indian police have been loitering

around the ballot boxes as well, but don't appear to interfere. Two Indian journalists are trying to get interviews with voters but not having much success – they say people are camera shy and reluctant to talk about their political views.

I had a little more luck speaking to voters than the Indian press, and the following are some sound-bites from interviews conducted at the TGiE headquarters at Gangchen Kyishong and the polling station at TCV Day School in Dharamsala:

> 'This is a proud day for Tibetans – we can show the world our democracy, and we can carry our Green Books. Today we are Tibetan, but our brothers and sisters in Tibet cannot have this day – this we have to remember' (Gadong, monk from Kirti monastery),
>
> 'it looks like children revising before their exam [laughs]... everyone is sitting in the streets reading posters, trying to memorise it' (Togden, Teacher, Yongling School),
>
> 'So that is my civic duty done... I have done my responsibility and I hope my candidates they will win' (Tendar, housewife).

In the evening I reconvene with members of 'Youth for Better MPs' and catch up with their day's activities:

> Tsultrim: I was in the queue to vote and some people had these posters from other organisations so I had some of our posters and... you know we have all three regions on one poster so I just cut each into three and go along each line giving these and talking to people. I maybe gave out 40 lists...
> Damdul: [interrupts] I went to Upper TCV to vote. It's a really important polling station with all the TCV staff. So I was standing in queue and these people – older people – are discussing who to vote for, and saying they really don't know. So I was listening and I had a pile of our yellow posters in my pocket so I just gave one to this guy and explained we aren't [an] organisation, we are just some youths coming together and we think these people would be good MPs. And I said, you know, I am not telling you how to vote, I am just suggesting these people, and you can take or leave it. And then people saw and started coming to me for copy and in the end I gave out lots – you could see people reading them in all the queues!
> Dechen: [much laughter] I didn't only give out posters to the queue, I stuck some in the ballot room! I put one on the blackboard and some on the desks. It's making it easy for people – they just copy!
> Tsultrim: [laughter] anyway we can say that it was not us who put up those posters – some voter must have taken it in!

Along with the lack of a fully secret ballot, such activities certainly undermine any claims that this was an entirely free and fair election, and highlight more general limitations faced by this nascent democracy. Yet, at the same time, the enthusiasm and determination to engage with the political process demonstrated by these young activists does fundamentally challenge the political apathy discussed earlier. Indeed, perhaps the journey to a more participative and potentially multi-party

democratic system will necessarily involve some less than democratic practices and interventions.

19th April 2006: The results are announced

Regional election committees are responsible for ensuring that their communities hear the election results, which are also published in Tibetan newspapers, journals and websites and picked up by some Indian press. In terms of the outcome for the youth campaign, there was a significant increase in the number of young and pro-independence MPs, with 20 candidates from the Youth for Better MPs list being elected. Indeed, the formation of a more youthful and radical assembly was the story of the elections:

> 'Tibetans have opted for a younger look for their parliament-in-exile in northern India, with some new members saying they would press for independence for their homeland... The new parliament has 16 new faces, most of them from younger generation Tibetans... the results give younger Tibetans, generally viewed as more radical than their elders, a voice in parliament for the first time' (AFP 21 April 2006).

In summary, this narrative montage has aimed to give an impression of how the electoral process was experienced and in turn shaped by an increasingly influential group within the exile community and provide an insight into their motivations, ideas and strategies. Whilst 'Youth for Better MPs' did not directly challenge the electoral system per se they nevertheless managed to forge new political discourses. By representing a different style of politics (modern, youth-focused and based on political activism), promoting an alternative political agenda (*rangzen*) and employing innovative political strategies (campaigning across the settlements and using new media) from the regional associations, the 'Youth for Better MPs' campaign was effectively a critical intervention into the political and electoral status quo. Acting as a catalyst in instigating heated debates regarding the nature and problems of regionally-based politics, this youth coalition brought into the open latent issues within the community and went some way to challenging the apathy perpetuated by the existing system. More widely, these debates, discussions and interventions are a positive sign for Tibetan democracy in general as they are generating the beginnings of genuine democratic debates and political engagement within the community.

8.5 Conclusion: the possibilities and limitations of strategic democracy

This chapter has sought to build up a picture of the evolution, rationale and limitations of both Tibetan democracy in exile and the TPiE election system

through an analysis of official and popular narratives, and an ethnographic focus on the 2006 elections. What has emerged is a picture of a nascent and often experimental form of democracy shaped by a very specific set of circumstances, spatialities and ideologies. Facing significant barriers to full democratisation, TGiE is nevertheless attempting to forge a democratic path different to that of the West. It is one rooted in Tibetan cultural values but also influenced by the realities of life in exile, and actively constructing links between the exile population and the homeland. It is a democracy which, initiated and sustained in a refugee community with previous experience of only theocratic rule, has achieved a considerable amount. In terms of a lens through which to view the role, rationale and limitations of TGiE as an institution, a focus on issues of democracy and elections has been instructive. For, in this case where the election system is so consciously designed to fulfil specific normative functions for the exilic citizenry, the TPiE election system have elucidated issues of political and national identity construction; exilic dilemmas; the politicisation of Tibetan culture and religion; how different parts of the diaspora are viewed by the Tibetan administration; the TGiE's externally facing legitimising strategies; and the rehearsal of state-like practices in preparation for future territorial governance.

Returning to more theoretical debates, despite its 'uniqueness,' I have argued that this case does have a lot to offer broader debates regarding the development and nature of democracy and the socio-political functioning of election systems. Turning first to issues of democracy, rather than force Tibetan democracy into theoretical boxes into which it simply does not fit, this chapter has argued that it is more fruitful to examine the ways that this case intersects with democracy literature in both confirmatory and challenging ways. Perhaps the most significant confirmatory lessons learned from this case are that democratisation is a protracted, fragile and difficult process (Held 2006: 1). Democracy imposed from the top-down is inevitably weak, and democracy is both difficult to teach and requires a process of gradual evolution in order to take root. In addition, this case substantiates the key relationship between democracy and legitimacy, but does so in a way which complicates conventional interpretations of the role of external actors in the initiation of democracy. Rather than imposers of democracy, actors such as China, Western states and inter-governmental organisations are perceived as key audiences for the performance of this democracy, with TGiE seeking legitimacy through its distancing from Chinese politics and adherence to international norms of good governance.

The case of Tibetan democracy also challenges and contributes to key debates on democracy and culture. With its idiosyncratic evolution and characteristics, exile Tibetan democracy contests the structuralist school of thought with its focus on Western historical models and the socio-economic and cultural preconditions for democracy (Dahl 1989; Lakoff 1996) and instead (re)focuses critical attention on Rustow's (1970) dynamic model of democratic transition. In addition, this case lends weight to assertions that democracy is pluralistic and culturally contingent. In essence that 'countries will necessarily be "differently democratic"' (UNDP 2002: 2). Moreover, the close relationship between Tibetan culture, Buddhism and democracy provides an important contribution to the Asian values and democracy debate and supports Saward's claim that the 'serial "indigenisation" of democracy represents its future' (2003: 114). In addition, the Tibetan case highlights issues hitherto overlooked by existing literature on democracy. These include a leader imposing democracy on 'his people', democracy being an integral part of a freedom struggle and democracy as deeply symbolic: a symbolic rebuke to the Chinese; a symbolic renewal and strengthening of the community; and a symbolic outreach to the West.

In light of this, the fact that this is a democracy functioning in a stateless polity demands rethinking of the relationships between political representation, territory, democracy and statehood more generally. This chapter has shown that a key tension at the heart of the TPiE election system, and exile Tibetan democracy more generally, is between its instrumental role as a mechanism of governance within the exile polity and its multiple strategic roles. The latter include appealing for international recognition and legitimation; a training exercise in order to implement democracy in Tibet; shaping the political consciousness of the diaspora; uniting the electorate under a banner of Tibetan nationalism; and creating a strategically balanced microcosm of the community in exile. This is, therefore, a democracy which spans and innovatively attempts to integrate different spatial and temporal contexts. It is forging links with the *past* in terms of the traditional regions and religious sects of the homeland. It is an acknowledgement of the *present* situation of being in exile, representing a global diaspora and attempting to symbolically unite the populations in exile and in Tibet. And it is a strategic form of planning for the *future* with regards to a united electorate familiar with democratic procedures.

However, as has been discussed above, the prioritising of these strategic roles over democracy as a means of governing in exile has, given the almost five decades in exile, proved to be increasingly problematic on an everyday level. Ironically, it is the mundane functioning of democracy on the ground in exile – especially in the settlements – which is most limited in this case. Indeed, with regards to the question of how parliamentary elections function in a 'state' without sovereignty over territory, I have argued that an artificial and symbolic electoral system, albeit established for key strategic reasons and eloquent in theory, faces considerable challenges when translated into reality on the ground. Perhaps the most pertinent response that this study has thrown up in response to this initial query is therefore to highlight how essential local territorialised politics and representation is to effective democracy and governance. As such, this case encourages us to rethink the intersection of political and territorial identities with and by electoral systems and the (dis)functionality of symbolic territory as a basis for political representation.

Finally, since neither in present-day exile nor in TGiE plans for the future is this democracy associated with a conventional sense of statehood, this case exemplifies the 'complex relationship between state formation, or reformation, and transitions to democracy' (Anderson 1999: 8). Echoing the wider argument in this thesis regarding the spanning of issues of statehood and statelessness, Tibetan democracy is attempting to function in both transnational and state-like ways. However, with the challenges faced by a lack of territorial constituencies in exile this case cannot be read as an affirmation of cosmopolitan democracy (Archibugi *et al* 1998). Rather, the ambiguous relationship between TGiE and statehood vindicates calls to extend empirical and theoretical gazes beyond the territorial sovereign state as the basic political unit for democracy and seriously engage with the 'extension of orthodox democratic practice beyond national boundaries' (Saward 2003: 31). This therefore opens up the possibilities for stateless/ diaspora/ refugee democracies and alternative territorial ways of thinking about political communities more generally. Indeed, as I will argue in the concluding chapter, Tibetan democracy, and the TGiE itself as an institution can and should be read as a laboratory of innovative politico-territorial strategising and as a harbinger of possible geopolitical reconfigurations.

Chapter 9
The Political Geographies of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

> *'what if these kinds of states were allowed to coexist, to be exemplars of stateness everywhere, to speak to what states elsewhere might also become? Then we would have a basis for starting to radically alter the political geography of the state which we teach, analyse and perhaps occasionally create.'*
> (Robinson 2003: 651)

9.1 Introduction

Based on ethnographic research on exiled Tibetan political institutions and practices in India, this study has investigated sovereignty in exile. The preceding chapters have unpacked a range of aspects of TGiE's state-like functioning and articulations of sovereignty: its territorialised administration of exile settlements; its governance over its population; its construction of political identities; and the establishment of its democratic practices and institutions. The purpose of this final chapter is two-fold. Firstly, to pull together the arguments made in the empirical chapters and, secondly, to sketch out the wider theoretical implications of this study. In order to work through these, I want to return to the research aims set out in Chapter 1:

(i) to examine the nature of sovereignty articulated by this territory-less polity
(ii) to investigate what kind of political entity the TGiE is.

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, as both state-like and territory-less the TGiE has an ambiguous relationship to statehood and can fruitfully be used to interrogate key political concepts such as the nature of the state, questions of sovereignty and the role of territory. Attending to the first aim, this chapter begins by summarising the key arguments via three cuts at TGiE's exercise of sovereignty, focusing on issues of recognition, legitimacy and legality; territory and territoriality; and relations with the host state. Turning to the question of what kind of polity TGiE is, the second, shorter, section examines how TGiE fits and fails to fit modes of both statehood and statelessness, interrogates the utility of such a distinction and reflects on issues of temporality. Finally I broaden the perspective and sketch out the implications of this research for thinking about alternative geopolitical futures.

9.2 De facto, displaced, tacit: the sovereign articulations of the TGiE

The issue of sovereignty has been central to this study, underpinning how and why TGiE functions as it does. As noted in Chapter 2, sovereignty is a complex and increasingly contested concept which from conventional perspectives is central to the geographical assumptions of the 'territorial trap' (Agnew 1994) and, under more critical interpretations, is a lens through which to view the operation of political power at a range of scales and by a variety of polities. I want to draw together a number of arguments made in this study by focusing on three aspects of TGiE's articulations of sovereignty. Firstly, the relationship between sovereignty and authority will be unbundled through an examination of legal recognition, and it will be argued that TGiE has a degree of de facto sovereignty based on its claims to and production of legitimacy. Secondly, the relationship between sovereignty and territory will be untangled through examining the range of territorialising strategies TGiE engages in and its articulation of displaced sovereignty. Finally, attention will shift from TGiE as an entity in and of itself to its contradictory relationship with its host state India, and the notion of 'tacit sovereignty' is developed to describe the undeclared and provisional nature of exilic Tibetan sovereignty.

9.2.1 Recognition, legitimacy and de facto sovereignty

The most common bases for asserting that TGiE lacks (de jure) sovereignty is that it is not legally recognised by any state or government, and that it has no law-making or law-enforcing abilities (see Chapter 2). As outlined in Chapter 5, although the institutional framework of a judiciary has been developed in the form of the Tibetan Justice Commission, there is a fundamental lack of juridical power. Thus, as a legally unrecognised polity, TGiE is in the 'unenviable position of having no "legal" or "constitutional" status... and consequently is not able to use coercive force to compel acquiescence with their policies' (Goldstein 1975: 20). Rulings from the TPiE and judgements passed by the Justice Commission are not legally binding and, without a monopoly over the use of violence, not legally enforceable.

In light of this, it is logical to argue that 'sovereignty' is an inappropriate term to use with regards to TGiE, and that employing it overstretches the concept. However, TGiE is not in a state of paralysis, or a shadow administration deficient in all governmental powers. On the contrary, TGiE has existed for almost half a century, enacts a wide range of governmental functions, claims legitimacy and has

constructed a pseudo-legal personality.[164] In asking what this means for the realist assumption that a polity not recognised is thus not sovereign, I want to argue that the teasing apart of recognition, legitimacy and sovereignty enables us to focus on non-state entities such as TGiE and interrogate their claims to and production of legitimacy and sovereignty. Such 'unbundling' requires an important distinction to be made between de jure and de facto sovereignty.

Widening the notion of sovereignty 'to include other forms of power that are not strictly juridical' (Ong 1999: 216) opens up the idea of de facto sovereignty: the ability and capacity to exercise power. As such, sovereignty is released from purely legal definitions and becomes a far broader concept applicable beyond conventional statehood. So, can a polity have de facto sovereignty without de jure sovereignty? The conventional response would be no, sovereignty requires both elements. There are, however, important empirical cases where these forms of sovereignty have diverged. For example, as noted in Chapter 2, the postcolonial 'new sovereignty game' has seen the establishment of both quasi states (Jackson 1990) which are internationally recognised but lack basic state functions, and de facto states which exercise state capabilities but lack recognition (Pegg 1998). In light of such contradictions and broader global economic transformations, Austin and Kumar assert that the 'existence of sovereignty (in a legal sense) is no longer a useful indicator of a state's actual capacity to carry out its will' (1998: 53). Agnew takes this further and challenges the very assumption 'that there actually is a pure de jure sovereignty from which de facto sovereignty is a lapse or anomaly,' and instead claims that 'de facto sovereignty is all there is' (2005: 437).

My argument here, however, does not rely upon dismissing de jure sovereignty. Rather, I want to suggest that traditional legal readings of sovereignty have important purchase, even in cases such as TGiE, and that there are indeed dangers in stretching the concept of sovereignty too far. So, following Murphy (1996), de jure sovereignty over bounded territory can be seen as the dominant 'political-territorial ideal'; a rigid order which, although never fully realised, does retain ideological and practical significance. It is this 'gold standard' of sovereignty which TGiE strives towards and which shapes how this polity constructs itself. Exemplifying this are the 'Guidelines for Future Tibet's Polity' (1992) discussed in

[164] For the purpose of the following discussion, I am defining legitimacy both in a normative sense as the right to govern and in a positive sense as the popular acceptance of an administration as an authority by those over whom it governs.

Chapter 8. Whilst keeping this ideal of de jure sovereignty in mind, it is to TGiE's everyday articulations of de facto sovereignty that I now want to turn.

De facto sovereignty is constituted by both the production of and acquiescence to governance and coercive power. In terms of the former, an important starting point is the exclusivity of TGiE's exercise of political authority within the Tibetan community-in-exile. Whilst the exile administration has had its fair share of critics, unlike many exile movements (see Shain 1989; Goddeeris 2007) there has never been a serious challenge to TGiE's authority and legitimacy. In addition, as demonstrated throughout this study, TGiE has established 'an ensemble of institutional arrangements for rule' (Luke 1996: 498) and has centralised control over its scattered population. Emblematic of this is the administration's IDPs which, as explored in Chapter 6, are examples of nascent state-planning, setting out a vision for a standardised 'welfare state' within the exiled community and being implemented by an expanding administrative reach.

Shifting to the 'subjects' of governance, as explored through the contexts of citizenship, democracy and welfare provision, TGiE is looked upon by the Tibetan people as their legitimate government and the majority of Tibetans in exile do comply with TGiE policies. I have documented how the early refugees moved thousands of miles to the unfamiliar environment of South India because their government told them to (Chapter 5), Tibetans in exile continue to pay voluntary taxes (Chapters 6 and 7), and TGiE acts as a legitimate arbiter of conflicts within the community (Chapter 5). Therefore, distinguishing between legitimacy and legality, whilst TGiE's authority cannot be based on legal powers, this exile administration achieves compliance through its management of societal pressure and cultivation of moral authority.

Alongside their leader's charismatic authority based on his status as a reincarnation of the patron deity of Tibet (Ardley 2003b), TGiE's claims of historical precedence and the transplantation of customary institutional structures directly from Tibet, the moral authority and popular support enjoyed by TGiE is also founded upon the influence of Tibetan nationalism. Explored in Chapters 5, 7 and 8, Tibetan nationalism was solidified in exile through TGiE's initiation of nation-building projects and fostering of a standardised Tibetan national identity which is intended to unite the geographically disparate exile community. Not only does this challenge poststructuralist dismissals of essentialised identities,

territorial rootedness in exile and the resurgence of nationalism, but a symbiotic relationship between nationalism and constructions of sovereignty is also apparent in this case. TGiE is the primary architect of these re-workings and reinventions of Tibetan traditions and, in turn, Tibetan nationalism forms a crucial element in the performance and maintenance of the legitimacy vested in TGiE.

As argued in Chapters 6 and 7, central to the everyday practices through which TGiE produces de facto sovereignty, ensures legitimacy and claims loyalty are the range of technologies of government (Foucault 1991 ; Dean 1999) underpinning TGiE's attempts to construct a Tibetan 'population' in exile and institutionalise state-citizen relationships. In light of Weber's observation that 'what a state must do in order to be sovereign is control the simulation of its "source" of sovereign authority and simulate a boundary which marks the range of its legitimate powers and competencies' (1995: 129), I have asserted that a key simulation of TGiE's sovereignty is its differentiation from exile NGOs and businesses and the concurrent fashioning of a Tibetan population, civil society and nascent economy in exile as quasi-objects separate from the 'political' realm through which they are governed (Hannah 2000). The construction of an exile 'population' in particular has been key, not only to a Tibetan 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991), but as a legitimising strategy for TGiE claims to be 'their' rightful representative. As an extra-territorial form of power, governmentality has therefore proved to be a useful framework for examining TGiE's 'regimes of practice' (Corbridge *et al* 2005: 11). However, as distinct modalities of power, sovereignty and governmentality are arguably impossible to reconcile and, as I concluded in Chapter 6, whilst TGiE effectively employs a range of techniques of government, this framework has limitations. Governmentality cannot be used to differentiate between state and non-state modes of power and, given TGiE's lack of juridical status, its inability to claim the legal right to govern is a significant barrier to this polity 'qualifying' for statehood. As such, and following Agamben (1998), bringing sovereignty back into dialogue with the practices of governmentality can offer a more productive approach to examining the intersection of the law, statehood and power.

Turning to the 'international' audience for TGiE's constructions of de facto sovereignty, Reisman (1991) argues that governments-in-exile appropriate symbols of legitimacy in order to engage with the international community. For TGiE, these performances of statehood and sovereignty are enacted principally through discourses of good governance and practices of paradiplomacy. Focusing on the

former, I have argued that conceiving of power as mediated by modes of representation, the 'language of stateness' (Hansen and Stepputat 2001: 9) is particularly important as TGiE engages in processes of self-construction and negotiates its place on the international stage. It is through discourses of democracy, ethnic nationhood and universal citizenship that TGiE most clearly employs such techniques. For example, as I asserted in Chapter 8, TGiE's strategic implementation and rhetorical articulation of democracy are key image-building exercises and an attempt to deploy for the Tibetan exiled polity (particularly in relation to China) the contemporary discourse of democratic good governance which is seen as the contemporary foundation of legitimate sovereignty (Frechette 2007). Therefore, like other non-state nationalist movements lacking international legal stature, TGiE seeks to create an 'international persona' through alternative routes to the global audience (Shain 1989) based around demonstrating its 'worthiness' and deservedness of material and ideological support.

In summary, I want to make two assertions as to why the framework of 'sovereignty' is an appropriate one for critically examining this case. First, whilst TGiE arguably exercises autonomy within India and the exile community has achieved a considerable degree of self-governance in exile, this polity is also engaging in sovereignty practices. As asserted throughout this study, TGiE articulates a particular form of authority, constructing legitimacy through moral compliance from its population and territorialising its governance to the extent that it can in an exile situation. Secondly, teasing apart the constituent elements of authority has identified two routes to sovereignty: a dominant discourse of de jure sovereignty based on recognition by other sovereign states and legal coercive powers, and an alternative route of de facto sovereignty based on claims to and constructions of legitimacy through which forms of compliance are generated. In focusing on the latter and examining how TGiE constructs a realm in exile over which it claims authority, this therefore refutes both the assumption that a polity not recognised is not sovereign and the idea of sovereignty as absolute. Thus, despite its lack of official recognition, TGiE can function as a legitimate, if not legal, government with de facto, if not de jure, sovereignty. Put another way, TGiE might be achieving more than autonomy, but its legitimacy amounts to less than de jure sovereignty and it is in this gap between de jure sovereignty and autonomy that a range of modes of de facto sovereignty lie (Austin and Kumar 1998; Agnew 2005). My aim has therefore not been to over-stretch the concept of de jure sovereignty but rather to differentiate the idea of de facto sovereignty: an approach

which does not undermine our ability to engage with the ideological hegemony of dominant readings of legal sovereignty, but rather enhances our understanding of the concept. However, this remains an unstable articulation of legitimacy, authority and de facto sovereignty which, as I shall explore in the following section, is based on important contradictions and limitations.

9.2.2 Strategic territorialisation and displaced sovereignty

Whilst considerable critical attention has been given to the relationship between sovereignty and political authority (Walker 1993; Luke 1996), the connection between sovereignty and territoriality has enjoyed less systematic analysis (although see Murphy 1996; Agnew 2005). As noted in Chapters 2 and 5, as bounded territory is fundamental to classical definitions of sovereignty, a reasonable assumption is that without legal jurisdiction over territory in Tibet or in exile, TGiE has a highly tenuous relationship to territory and therefore lacks sovereignty. However, like all polities TGiE does occupy some sort of space (Agnew and Corbridge 1995) and, though far from having a conventional state-like territorial form, this exile administration is engaged in processes of territorialisation.

As Chapter 5 demonstrated, TGiE exercises a modality of power and space which is in many ways state-like. This is evident not only in its hierarchies of control but also in the discourse of 'jurisdictions' articulated by TGiE officials (Section 5.3.2). However – and there are always 'howevers' in this case – TGiE's lack of official sovereignty over these spaces means this is far from *legal* jurisdiction. There is a territoriality to TGiE's sovereign practices, but this is de facto rather than de jure control over territory. Moreover, conceptualising the spatiality of power in this case requires careful navigation between realist and post-structuralist interpretations. Though decidedly not a conventional case of centralised power operating over absolute, bounded territory, TGiE achieves more than simply exercising diffused power over de-territorialised, transnational networks. This exile administration's construction of territory and power is somewhere between state-space and diaspora-space. The settlements as dispersed sites of territorialised power therefore confirm Forsberg's (1996) claim that sovereign statehood should be treated as only one form of territorial practice and offer a functioning example of Agnew's assertion that 'political authority is not restricted to states and... such authority is thereby not necessarily exclusively territorial' (2005: 441). Indeed, an ethnographic focus on such partial forms of stateness exposes the contingencies in

bundling together sovereignty, territory and statehood and reveals the everyday workings of territoriality: sovereign 'achievements' which are so often hidden from view in recognised states.

Therefore, while 'territoriality... is widely seen as a largely successful strategy for establishing the exclusive jurisdiction implied by state sovereignty', de facto sovereignty, as the case of TGiE illustrates, is 'not necessarily so neatly territorialized' (*ibid*: 437). Central to this is the issue of the homeland. Whilst TGiE lacks de jure and de facto sovereignty over the territory of Tibet, as I argued in Chapters 5 and 8, the idea of homeland underpins its raison d'être. At the same time, the territory over which TGiE does exercise de facto sovereignty – the patchwork of exile settlements – is land which at face value has little meaningful connection to the Tibetan population now resident there. As the symbolic territorial organisation of the TPiE elections demonstrates, this disjuncture between population, homeland and sovereignty has important implications for the articulation of sovereignty and territoriality in this case (see Chapter 8). Encapsulating the strategies TGiE employs to connect multiple notions of territory within a regime of governance, this electoral system symbolically and materially brings the homeland into the heart of TGiE politics. Though the limitations of symbolic territory for democratic practices are significant and revealing, the association between the community-in-exile and the Tibetan homeland enables TGiE to maintain its de facto sovereignty within the settlements without contesting the judicial sovereignty of the host state India. With regards to the electorate itself, the symbolic representation of an otherwise disconnected population (Tibetans in Tibet) is a significant strategy through which TGiE constructs its claim that it represents – and is legitimated by – Tibetans both in exile and in Tibet.

Furthermore, the issue of distinct Tibetan 'populations' in different places and with diverse relationships to TGiE signals a key complication of the notion of a 'home territory'. As illustrated in Chapter 5, Tibetan spaces in India in effect constitute a second or pseudo homeland for many in the exile community. Such a displacement of ideas of 'homeland' not only requires a shift in conventional frames of reference regarding transnational practices and the concept of diaspora but disrupts the relationship between sovereignty and territory. While TGiE invests considerable material and ideological work in creating distinctions between an 'inside' and an 'outside', including the establishment of exclusive Tibetan citizenship (in exile) and

the (re)creation of Departments of 'Home' and 'International Relations', the location of and relationship between the domestic and the foreign in this case is far from conventional. As such, the operations of TGiE fundamentally challenge the binary of national/international which is at the heart of realist discourses of sovereignty (Agnew 1994; Taylor 1994).

Following Agnew's observation that 'the negotiation and redefinition of political authority in geographically complex ways suggests the need to change the terms of debate about sovereignty' (2005: 438), I asserted in Chapter 5 that these dislocations force us to think beyond binaries of deterritorialisation/reterritorialisation, homeland/diaspora, national/transnational and enable us instead to consider the notion of *displaced* sovereignties. This is sovereignty which has both been constructed in exile – de facto authority over the 'real' territories of the exile settlements – and which has travelled into exile – TGiE's inherent sovereignty based on its legitimacy as a continuation of the Government of Tibet. This dislocation of the source and enactment of sovereignty therefore breaks down the assumed correlation of sovereignty with a single bounded territory, yet does not eschew the link between sovereignty and territory altogether. Rather, it is reconfigured in complex and contradictory ways. What TGiE lacks in official jurisdiction over territory it compensates for by incorporating a symbolic and imagined territory into its sovereign practices, thus reinforcing the assertion that the idea of territory helps frame governmental actions (Luke 1991). Indeed, tensions between sovereignty articulated over 'real' territories, and legitimacy claims based on symbolic links to a distant homeland get to the heart of TGiE's spatialised authority and the core dilemmas of life in exile. Essentially this is between retaining the desire to return home by maintaining a sense of the temporariness of exile, and the community becoming increasingly attached to and rooted in the 'real' spaces of exile as their sojourn there extends (Diehl 2002). In general, therefore, this case exemplifies the need to recognise and be sensitive to the fact that territory comes in many different forms, and that territoriality can be enacted in a range of ways.

9.2.3 Host state relations and tacit sovereignty

Thus far, my aim has been to expand the notion of sovereignty by shifting attention away from the legal singularity of de jure sovereignty to TGiE's multiple articulations of de facto sovereignty. However, stretching the concept of sovereignty can compromise our ability to analyse its power and influence. I now want to

establish some boundaries regarding my deployment of 'sovereignty' by focusing on the functioning of TGiE vis-à-vis the Indian state and highlighting the juxtaposition of TGiE's de facto sovereignty with Indian de jure sovereignty.

Established from the beginning of this thesis, the relationship between an exiled administration and its host state is central to the functioning and limitations of such polities. Fundamentally not one of equals, the relationship between TGiE and GoI is framed within official discourses on both sides as one between a generous host and a grateful guest (Diehl 2002), founded on long-standing spiritual connections between Tibet and India, and the fact that Tibetans are largely seen as model refugees. However, as outlined in Chapter 3, the relationship – and more specifically the status of TGiE in India – has varied considerably over time, contingent on ever-changing Indo-Sino relations. In thinking through how to conceptualise this relationship, a number of shared assumptions underlying contemporary critical (re)interpretations of sovereignty have resonance. First, in terms of the rejection of a zero-sum-game with regards to territory and sovereignty my argument has been that the existence of TGiE-run settlements in India does not lead to a loss of Indian de jure sovereignty per se. Rather, following Ong's observation that 'the state has to will a piece of territory to be put outside the normal juridical order... and to agree to outsource state functions... to other regulatory agencies' (1999: 239), this is a consensual delegation of authority and devolution of certain sovereign prerogatives to TGiE. The resulting configuration of sovereignty and territory may expose the fallacy of pure de jure sovereignty (Agnew 2005), but it impinges little on the legal sovereignty of the host state. It is a 'floating sovereignty' which creates shadows but does not affect the core characteristics of the sovereignty 'underneath'.

Secondly in dismissing sovereignty as absolute and indivisible (Agnew 2005; Elden 2006), a more flexible approach has been promoted with sovereignty posited as labile, divisible and existing in 'varying degrees of "sovereignty" or "nonsovereignty"' (Constantinou 1998: 37). As such, a host of 'multiform sovereign visions' (Sidaway 2003: 160) have been proposed, and my intention here is to examine their utility and limitations for the sovereign relationship between TGiE and GoI. As a compromise between the retention of central sovereign control and competing, shared or overlapping sovereignties which imply perhaps too strong an equality between TGiE and GoI sovereignty, Ong's concept of 'graduated sovereignty' initially appears appropriate for this case. Denoting a 'series of zones

that are subjected to different kinds of governmentality and that vary in terms of the mix of disciplinary and civilising regimes' (Ong 1999: 7), graduated sovereignty implies the fragmentation and flexibility of sovereignty regimes where the nature, but not existence, of sovereignty has been transformed (Agnew 2005). Reading TGiE's management of its settlements through the lens of 'graduated sovereignty', many of the practices and processes involved appear similar: Tibetan settlements can also be 'institutional domains that vary in their mix of legal protections, controls, and disciplinary regimes' (Ong 1999: 215).

Although 'graduated sovereignty' is useful for thinking through the territorial and institutional structures of TGiE, in order to interrogate more thoroughly the relationship between Indian de jure sovereignty and TGiE de facto sovereignty I want to turn briefly to the notion of a 'third-space of sovereignty' as derived from Bruyneel's (2007) study of U.S.-indigenous relations. My point here is not that the Tibetan community-in-exile articulates a notion of indigenous sovereignty per se. Rather, indigenous studies and postcolonial criticism more generally open up fruitful avenues by facilitating a 'decolonisation of our spatial imaginations to reveal forms of political space that cannot simply be mapped onto the boundary lines of the international state system' (*ibid*: 222. See also Anand 2008). Focusing attention on interstitial locations, indigenous politics fundamentally challenges the absolutism of state sovereignty with, for example, Cassidy's notion of 'concurrent sovereignty' (1998: 99) providing a constructive alternative to the idea that the indigenous (or indeed exile) politics can result only in the elimination of state sovereignty or the denial of exile sovereignty. In light of this, Bruyneel's Bhabha-inspired formulation of a 'third-space of sovereignty' offers a productive framework for problematising the concept of sovereignty in this case, with the position of Tibetan settlements being conceptualised as residing neither simply inside nor outside the Indian political system, but rather existing on these very boundaries.

Yet, missing from these formulations of 'graduated sovereignty' and 'third-space sovereignty' is a vocabulary that can describe the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the relationship between TGiE and GoI. Both Tibetan and Indian interviewees described a relationship which was both official and unofficial, benevolent yet restrictive, ambiguous and clandestine; a case where 'what is said and what is done is so very different' (Anoop, 13.04.2007). Within this relationship, the boundaries of authority, legitimacy and legality are constantly being negotiated. A key example is the use of terminology by TGiE. In common parlance

in the Tibetan community TGiE is referred to as a 'government', yet in official interactions 'Central Tibetan Administration' is used. In a similar vein, while Tibetans refer to their 'embassies' abroad, they are officially termed 'Offices of Tibet', the 'constitution' becomes a 'charter', and 'taxes' are 'voluntary contributions.' This semantic cautiousness is significant in two regards. Firstly this strategy was described by a number of interviewees as the Tibetan government 'tip-toeing' around the GoI and its sovereignty in deference to Indian law and giving due regard to its non-legal status in order to safeguard the continuing Tibetan presence in India. Secondly, it illustrates how China impinges on TGiE's 'sovereign articulations' both in terms of ongoing Chinese pressure on the host state and TGiE's downplay of its existence in an attempt to foster a 'conducive atmosphere' for ongoing negotiations with Beijing.

The key distinguishing feature of this case, therefore, is that TGiE's de facto sovereignty is never openly declared by TGiE nor explicitly acknowledged or officially sanctioned by GoI. As such, I want to suggest the notion of 'tacit sovereignty'. Whilst the Tibetan settlements might be 'spaces of exception' within the sovereign state of India, TGiE is fundamentally not a limit case 'which throws into crisis the original fiction of sovereignty' (Agamben 1995: 118). This is not sovereignty in its final instance, with everything stripped away. Quite the opposite in fact. This is sovereignty which exists through practice; in what is done but not named, in what is held in suspension. Thus, TGiE's de facto sovereignty is based on implicit understandings and is assumed through the everyday interactions and performances outlined above, but is never openly declared or identified.

9.2.4 Summary

I want to conclude this section by further examining this idea of tacit sovereignty in relation to TGiE's sovereign articulations. When observed through the lens of tacit sovereignty, TGiE's lack of recognition is far from a clear-cut issue. Whilst legally unrecognised, a range of sovereign (and less-sovereign) entities interact with the exiled administration in ways which *imply* its recognition and confer it with legitimacy: from India granting TGiE autonomy within its settlements (Chapter 5), to international NGOs regarding TGiE as the official representative of the refugee population and mediator for aid programmes (Chapter 6), and indeed exiled Tibetans' recognition of TGiE as their 'legitimate government' (Chapter 7). The existence of such inferred recognition therefore challenges and broadens our understanding of this 'act', suggesting multiple forms of recognition which reveal

the existence and functioning of otherwise 'illegal' polities. The unstated and the assumed are also key features of TGiE's spatial expressions of sovereignty, illustrated by the disjuncture between local-level Indian bureaucrats working with TGiE officials as *governmental* counterparts, yet their superiors denying the legal existence of a 'government' operating on Indian sovereign territory. As such, I have argued for the geographical contingency of de facto sovereignty, such that 'what counts and/or functions as sovereign is not the same in all times and places' (Weber 1995: 2). Finally, the undeclared 'don't ask, don't tell' nature of TGiE's sovereignty is key to the administration's ability to exist and function within the host state, with TGiE's de facto sovereignty over its settlements functional only through the creation of 'fictions' of sovereignty.

Unpacking sovereignty in this way therefore transports us 'beyond the issue of more or less sovereignty, beyond the presence or absence of undifferentiated sovereign power, towards a contextual understanding of different regimes, apparatus, expressions and representations of sovereignty' (Sidaway 2003: 174). As such, I have asserted that if sovereignty is treated only as an uncomplicated model of power and in purely legalist terms – as de jure sovereignty founded on legal recognition by other judicial sovereigns – then a vast array of sovereign practices, innovative territorialising strategies, legitimacy claims and expressions of authority are obscured. On the flip side, therefore, a focus on the undeclared yet daily enacted, the clandestine yet morally authoritative, the unrecognised yet effective augments and enriches understandings of sovereignty, positing it as multiple, processual, performative and emerging.

9.3 Between statehood and statelessness: categories, temporality and the 'rehearsal state'

If we consider sovereignty as the foundation upon which different polities can be based, then the disaggregation of sovereign power opens up conceptual space for the analysis of different political entities. Turning to the second research aim regarding what kind of polity TGiE is, this project can therefore be seen as a process of mapping out the constitution of this state-that-is-not-a-state. One of the central theoretical starting points for this research is theories of the state and, in asking whether TGiE is a state-like polity or not, I have attempted to demonstrate that the response is primarily contingent on the theories of the state that one buys into. If we are to follow conventional state theory based around Max Weber's

assertion that a state must meet a strictly defined list of criteria including a stable government with a bounded territory, a self-defined people and a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force then this polity will never count as a state. As noted repeatedly in this study, TGiE faces seemingly insurmountable barriers to achieving fully recognised sovereign statehood. Given its lack of jurisdiction over territory and restricted law-making abilities, TGiE's authority is limited and, whilst it can fulfil the provider role of the state, it struggles to protect or defend its own population.

However, if we adopt a critical engagement with the state and, as I have advocated in this project, follow Mitchell (1991), Abrams (1988) in conceiving the state not as something concrete there to be observed and analysed but rather as a structural effect, then TGiE does appear to have distinctly state-like attributes and functions. Each focusing on a different aspect of stateness, the preceding chapters have charted and analysed how this exile administration has accrued and reproduced a number of specifically state-like institutions, techniques and practices. These include the division of political power between a judiciary, executive and legislature; the centralisation and territorialisation of TGiE's authority and administrative structures across its dispersed settlements; the institutionalisation of citizenship, democracy and parliamentary elections; and the construction of a Tibetan population, civil society and economy as spheres separate from the TGiE and over which this polity can exercise a degree of governance. Indeed, though TGiE is engaged in nation-building in terms of cultural preservation, Tibetanised school curricula and fostering Tibetan identity, this polity is arguably doing more than 'just' nation-building and constitutes more than 'simply' a nation-in-exile. As noted above, its establishment and development of state-like institutions in exile and its territorialisation of power also points towards significant state-building processes. Outlining and analysing how TGiE is constituted through discourses and texts (1991 Charter, IDPs), performances and state rituals (parliamentary sessions, the paradiplomacy of Tibetan 'embassies'), everyday practices (the payment of *chatrel*, voting in elections) and materialities (the Green Book, settlement boundaries) this research therefore concurs with and contributes to critical approaches which perceive the state as something constituted by fleeting moments and everyday practices and relations (Hansen and Stepputat 2001; Painter 2006).

What then can the case of TGiE – as seen through the lens of critical state theory – tell us about the nature of statehood and the roles and functions of 'conventional' states? For a start, TGiE is a particularly revealing case as its establishment of state-like institutions since the early 1960s mean that it offers a fascinating insight into the early stages of state development and the construction of material thresholds of the 'state' as an institution. In addition, by focusing on state-making as a process and the state as a set of routinised norms and practices (Mitchell 1991), this therefore broadens our notion of what the state is, revealing it not as a monolithic entity but, rather, 'a set of practices enacted through relationships between people, places, and institutions' (Desbiens *et al* 2004: 242). Central to this has been the employment of ethnographic methodologies and a focus on agency and the bureaucratic messiness of state practices (Thrift 2000; Mountz 2003). For, it is at the local level and through everyday interactions, objects and people that TGiE is 'magicked into existence' as a government (Sidaway 2002: xi), engaged in democratic decision-making and providing welfare services to its exiled population. As such, this ethnography of TGiE's everyday articulations of stateness highlights the importance of focusing on the level of the quotidian as a site of state formation and powerfully exposes the contingent practices which underlie the social construction of political power in so-called 'normal' states. Focusing on a case which exemplifies the partial and processual nature of statehood can therefore demystify 'the state as the organising frame for social and political life' (Keating 2001: viii), rendering problematic the taken-for-granted.

By exposing the fallacy of a unified organisation called 'the state', the case of TGiE encourages us to think of statehood as relative and of the possibility of a polity having a degree of state*ness* without full state*hood*. Following Clapham (1998), I therefore want to argue for regarding different entities as meeting the criteria for international statehood to greater or lesser degree, rather than distinguishing sharply between entities that are, or are not, states. Given that no state fully realises the modern state ideal – no state has a true monopoly on physical force within its territory or restricts its power to the space within its borders – the conceptual dividing line between the sovereign state and other political entities is always contestable. It is also the case that it is the 'model of the western state [that] continues to resonate through theories of "the" state' (Robinson 2003: 648). This not only ignores and denigrates numerous state and non-state polities but creates an unhelpful division 'between "strong" long-established Western states at

the apex and postcolonial states [and I would add, non-state polities] as somehow abnormal or simply lacking the features of the western state' (Sidaway 2008: 49).

However, by arguing that stateness is a process which is always partial and undercut I do not want to downplay the ideological influence of statehood itself. Rather, the signifiers and institutions of statehood are strategic resources that are continually deployed by both recognised and unrecognised polities. The TGiE might emphasise some state functions (the provision of education, establishment of democracy and construction of political identities) over others such as military and defence, trade and foreign affairs which are noticeably absent or insignificant, but, in general, this polity's selective appropriation and adaptation of aspects of statehood is central to furthering its agenda. For, in addition to underpinning the practical project of governance in exile, TGiE's signifiers of statehood constitute an important role in seeking legitimacy and demonstrating the exile administration's ability to govern competently (Spears 2004). This is particularly salient in terms of proving to the Chinese authorities – and the international community more generally – that the Tibetan nation is capable of democratic self-governance and is therefore deserving of support (Shiromany 1998: 326). Therefore, just as de jure sovereignty is a powerful ideal to aspire to for the TGiE, so is being able to 'play the state game'. As such, non-state entities that claim aspects of state power should be treated neither as pretenders nor as states-in-waiting, but rather as players who, much like 'real' states, leverage aspects of sovereignty and statehood as they engage in the global political arena.

Of course, TGiE's state-like attributes only tell half the story about this polity. As outlined in Chapter 2, as a globally dispersed diaspora engaged in a range of transnational practices, often labelled as refugees and maintaining a strong desire to return to their homeland, exile Tibetans and their political administration share many characteristics with other stateless communities. However, as demonstrated through the empirical chapters, the relationship between this community and literature on statelessness is problematic. TGiE's governmental capabilities, re-territorialising practices in exile, displacement of 'conventional' home and host states roles and strategic essentialising of Tibetan identity through the construction of pseudo state-citizen relations complicate accepted understandings of transnationalism, diaspora and refugeehood. This case therefore adds empirical weight to calls to ground studies of transnationalism and turn critical attention to the political structures and practices which refugees and migrants bring with them

into exile (Mitchell 1997a; Al-Ali *et al* 2001). In summary, therefore, this state-*like* polity is also fundamentally state*less*. Both depictions are important and valid, and yet neither tells the full story. Rather, contradictions are at the core of this case. Caught between and disrupting the descriptors of statehood and statelessness, I have therefore argued that this case necessitates bringing together and blurring the boundary between literatures on the state and on statelessness.

In light of TGiE simultaneously demonstrating characteristics of both statehood and statelessness, how then can we best begin to categorise this polity? What pre-existing model best describes TGiE: government, state, regime, liberation movement, nation, institution or NGO? The issue of labels and categories has been a recurrent and important one in this study as, across a range of classificatory regimes, TGiE and its exile population have proved to be been notable misfits and outliers. For example, Chapter 2 discussed how TGiE shares little in common with other polities described as 'governments-in-exile' – especially those established during the World Wars – and how the exile community deviates from conventional interpretations of the concept of diaspora. Meanwhile, in Chapter 7, I outlined in detail how individual exile Tibetans are simultaneously both de facto refugees and citizens and yet legally neither. In light of such conceptual ambiguities, it is logical to shift attention away from fixed categorisations and binary conceptualisations and instead focus, as I predominantly have in this study, on the processes, practices, boundaries, thresholds and relationships through which TGiE constructs itself. As such, and following Doty's suggestion that:

> [p]erhaps it is not so critical to arrive at definitive understandings of important concepts such as national identity, the state, or sovereignty. Perhaps the critical questions revolve around determining the issues and uncertainties that elicit sovereignty-producing practices' (1996: 143),

my aim has been not necessarily to pin-down exactly what kind of political entity TGiE is but rather to consider what it does. Moreover, as a polity and community which appears to exist between and across a range of political categories and binaries – state/non-state, citizen/refugee, statehood/statelessness, sovereign/non-sovereign – this case fundamentally challenges not only the construction of such labels and dualisms, but their conceptual mapping onto each other. In light of this, I want to develop these critiques of the positivist technique of labelling and binary thinking by focusing on two broad themes which have framed many of the issues discussed in this project.

First, I want to consider the perspective of postcolonial critiques. On the one hand, it is important to be aware of and to problematise my application of ostensibly Western-centric theories, models and categories – of sovereignty, the state, governmentality, democracy and citizenship – to a non-Western context. On the other hand, when we focus on such discourses, we see that the situation is far from a one way imposition of Western ideas onto a non-Western case. Neither, of course, is it the case of TGiE constructing completely new political structures based on Tibetan or even 'Asian' political and cultural values. Rather, what has been revealed throughout this study is the exile Tibetan appropriation and re-working of Western political institutions, models and discourses: from participatory liberal democracy, to the tripartite division of political powers and the institutionalisation of universal citizenship. Emerging from this investigation is therefore a polity and politics which is shaped by distinctive Tibetan cultural and religious principles – and indeed where cultural preservation is a political act in and of itself – but where a constantly negotiated balance is being sought between adhering to Tibetan values and reflecting Western ideals back to a Western audience in order to seek legitimacy. Such a strategy of deliberately articulating discourses around democracy, environmentalism and human rights for specific Western audiences in order to strive for international 'recognition' is, I want to tentatively suggest, an example of 'strategic cosmopolitanism' (Woodward and Skrbis 2004) which warrants future analytical investigation. More generally, the crucial role that cultural and religious values plays in constructing political ideologies and institutional structures highlights conventional IR and political geography's dismissal of government and governance as culturally specific practices. As such, we need to shift our vantage point from 'viewing the rest of the world as peripheries or sites for testing models crafted in the West' (Ong 1999: 24) to learning from 'diverse political contexts' (Robinson 2003: 648).

A second recurrent theme which intersects with the question of what kind of polity TGiE is are a series of temporal issues. Noted in Chapter 2, the politics of 'return' and uncertainties regarding the political future define exile polities and populations (Shain 1989) and the Tibetan diaspora is no exception. As Lafitte observes, exile Tibetans are 'at once embodiments of an imagined timeless past, and citizens of the world, harbingers of a new world order, visionary futurists charting critical paths to sustainable futures' (1999: 156). As revealed in this thesis, balancing these different roles has been highly challenging and the bifurcated mandate of continuing the struggle for the homeland and dealing with

immediate needs in exile creates conflicting responsibilities on both personal and institutional levels and strikes at the heart of the purpose, role and function of TGiE (see Chapters 5 and 8 in particular).

Having been in exile for almost 50 years, the case of TGiE also challenges the presumed correlation between statehood and permanence, and statelessness and temporariness. This is a polity which has increasingly become 'stuck' in exile and is far from the 'fleeting or temporary phenomena' (Spears 2004: 28) of 'conventional' stateless communities. Teleological assumptions that this polity is at a 'halfway house' on the road to statehood (Gottlieb 1993: 32) should therefore be treated with caution as there 'is no "end of history" here – no one road to statehood that these entities will ultimately find themselves on' (Kingston 2004: 7). Rather, this research has been premised on TGiE existing as a polity in its own right rather than 'in transition' (Anderson 1996). Having said this, the future of the exile Tibetan community is also of fundamental importance to TGiE as an institution and is cross-cut by important uncertainties. In the short-term there are insecurities regarding the legal and political position of Tibetans within India after the current Dalai Lama dies while taking a longer view there is a distinctly ambivalent relationship between the Tibetan nation and statehood both in pre-1959 Tibet and in TGiE's proposal for a 'Middle Way' of genuine autonomy within a greater China. Indeed, it is the importance that TGiE attaches to future planning that offers a particularly enlightening insight into how we might tentatively attempt to define this polity.

As I have noted at a number of points through this study, TGiE has, through its IDPs, 1963 Constitution, 1991 Charter and 1992 Guidelines explicitly stated that the purpose of the time in exile is primarily to practice and experiment with aspect of statehood such as participatory politics, fiscal administration, sustainable agriculture, and 'modern' education and health care in anticipation of implementing these within a future Tibet. In light of this, TGiE emerges as an active state-in-waiting; a set of institutions, practices and actors through which the exiled community is experimenting, modifying and rehearsing statehood in order to employ it 'for real' back in the homeland. Or, to frame it in another way, this is a 'rehearsal state', complete with playwright (Dalai Lama, and increasingly the *Kalon Tripa*), designated roles amongst the Tibetan civil services, a dedicated rehearsal space in the exile settlements and a range of key audiences (notably Western states and the Chinese Government). Not only does the idea of rehearsal

chime with the opening vignette of this thesis where I describe a polity which appears to be 'playing' at being a state and trying out state roles, but it also provides an alternative and revealing aspect to the idea of 'state practices'. For, if we are to accept that 'conventional' states are always in process, then it is does not require too much of a conceptual leap to argue that all states are to some extent rehearsal states, experimenting with political discourses, practices and materialities in order to evolve and adapt to changing global geopolitical realities.

9.4 Conclusion: Envisioning alternative geopolitical futures

Shifting from a focus on individual states to the interstate system, I want to conclude this study by expanding the conceptual and empirical perspective and considering the extent to which this case can inform broader questions and debates within and beyond political geography. In many ways TGiE is an exceptional case. Not only is uniqueness a narrative through which exile Tibetans view themselves and present their community, culture, religion and politics to the world, but, as I have illustrated in this research, the TGiE and wider Tibetan diaspora have many distinctive features. These include the dual spiritual and religious roles of the Dalai Lama and influence of Tibetan Buddhist values in shaping political ideologies and strategies (e.g. the 'Middle Way Approach' and political philosophy of *satyagraha*); the evolution of exile Tibetan democracy and its realisation in the TPiE election system (Chapter 8); and the ambiguous relationship between TGiE and the host state India. An empirical focus on the exceptional in order to shine a critical spotlight on the 'normal' is a powerful and insightful strategy and one which has been employed to valuable effect within political and geopolitical theory (see Agamben 1998; Navaro-Yashin 2003).

However, I also want to assert that TGiE's articulation of alternative modalities of sovereignty and state-like practices should not be seen simply as an exotic anomaly or theoretical experiment. Rather, this case should be de-exceptionalisd in order to open up the possibility of using it as a framework or model for the specific case of refugee groups, and communities marginalised from the international system more generally. With regards to the former, the institutions and practices of TGiE can make important interjections in refugee policy debates regarding the issue of 'durable solutions'. Conventionally conceived as distinct stages in a refugee 'cycle', the three primary 'durable solutions' which the UNHCR is charged with pursuing for refugees are integration in the country of first asylum, resettlement in a third

country or return to the homeland, of which repatriation is the currently prioritised option (Van Hear 2003). However, for the majority of exile Tibetans, a fourth 'solution' has been sought in the form of autonomy within the host state. Distinct from integration or assimilation, as I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, TGiE can provide a pragmatic, viable and durable model of self-governance in exile whereby refugees preserve their culture and identity and the burden on the host state is significantly reduced over time. In addition, though distinctly limited in the legal realm, the institution of TGiE also provides a degree of security for this refugee community, both in tangible terms with regards to the provision of welfare and conferment of pseudo-legal status, but also by constituting a focal point for the diaspora to rebuild their lives, sustain traditional cultural practices and provide a sense of belonging. Alongside the territorialising strategies TGiE has engaged with in India and Nepal, these practices provide an important empirical grounding for Van Hear's assertion that 'transnationalism may in itself be a "durable solution" for conditions of displacement – or at least an "enduring" solution' (2003: 14). Considering implications of this case beyond refugee communities, as a lived reality of reconfigured and constantly negotiated sovereignty, the TGiE's structures and ideologies and its operations within the state of India could be instructive for other communities and polities traditionally marginalised from the interstate system. If tolerated by a host state, such *de facto* autonomy within mutually agreed legal boundaries, organised networks of cultural and educational institutions, state-*ness* without statehood and practicing of democracy could be a valuable template for other diasporas, or even for indigenous populations and national minority groups.

Shifting attention to more conceptual applications of this research, I want to argue that a focus on geopolitical anomalies offers a valuable glimpse of possible geopolitical futures. To date, the fallacy of the state as the principal container of society and sovereignty as absolute and invariably territorial (Agnew 2005) has been thrown into stark relief through critical analysis of dramatic geopolitical processes and events.[165] In contrast, I have argued here that the geographical assumptions constituting the territorial trap can also be approached from the perspective of non-state polities which challenge the geopolitical world order in

[165] For example, the context of post-soviet fragmentation (Agnew 1994); global economic trends such as accelerated globalisation (Herod *et al* 1998; Sparke 2004b), exchange-rate arrangements (Agnew 2005) and the current financial crisis (Bieri 2009); and the contingency of territorial sovereignty as demonstrated during the 'war on terror' military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, rendition flights and detentions at Guantánamo (Kaplan 2005; Elden 2006; Dalby 2007).

markedly understated ways. Returning to the tension between secession and the maintenance of the 'international order' outlined in Chapter 2, one outcome is the continued existence of geopolitical anomalies in their present ambiguous status: neither attaining independent statehood nor being reincorporated into existing sovereign states. Such a situation is certainly evident beyond the case of TGiE, with a number of de facto states (e.g. Somaliland, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) and dependencies (e.g. Faroe Islands, Saint Helen) having endured in their present status for considerable time. In addition, although denied diplomatic recognition, the PLO's 'non-member entity' status at the UN and SADR's membership of the African Union indicates that these non-state polities have garnered a degree of legal international personality. Therefore, while the persistence of international norms such as territorial integrity and the practice of state recognition has, and will likely continue to, prevent a number of geopolitical anomalies from 'graduating' to full statehood (Pegg 1998: 209), the very endurance of such polities in their present status can give empirical grounding to important speculative questions of 'what if the core political unit was not a nation-state and what if sovereignty did not have to be tied to territory?' As such, if polities such as TGiE are examples of reconfigured territorial-political relations which are being created and lived today, then a critical analysis of their existence and functioning should be a key starting point for discussions seeking to venture beyond the conventions of the contemporary international system.

The disaggregation of the concept of sovereignty into its constituent parts, the unbundling of sovereignty, territory and statehood and an ethnographic focus on everyday state-like practices enacted at the margins of the interstate system offers one such view of the future. This is an approach which has the potential to contribute to broader debates on a more diverse international society characterised by geopolitical arrangements displaying varying degrees of sovereignty and territoriality (Murphy 1996; Agnew 2005). Constituting a shift towards 'thinking of the state, sovereignty and territory in the plural rather than the singular' (Anderson 1996: 135), this would provide 'a richer vocabulary to accommodate the national claims that cannot be expressed within existing state structures' (Gottlieb 1993: 35) and 'ways of grasping and fashioning new forms of less restrictive political space' (Camilleri and Falk 1992: 9). Importantly, this is not necessarily a utopian vision of a state-less world consisting of fluid political communities as envisioned by proponents of hyper globalisation (O'Brien 1992; Appadurai 1996; Ohmae 1996). Rather, it is a geographical imagination based on a complex political

order with multiple sites of sovereign authority and where the boundaries of the existing international legal regime are stretched and reconfigured. Not only does this open up the possibility of alternative political arrangement but, somewhat counter-intuitively, the continued existence of such entities could lead to greater stability in the international system as they can be seen as a 'pragmatic and ad hoc way of reconciling irreconcilable principles' (Pegg 1998: 196); facilitating genuine self-determination but yet stopping short of granting independent sovereign statehood. Therefore as a complement rather than competitor to the existing politico-legal order this plurality of degrees of sovereignty could be 'a messy solution to a messy problem' (*ibid*: 194).

Thus, as I have demonstrated in this research, expanding our empirical gaze to critically engage with more varied forms of geopolitical arrangements eschews a view of the international system as constituted solely of territorially-bounded polities of indivisible sovereignty and offers valuable interjections into current thinking within political geography. Such an analysis of geopolitical formations which are alternatives to Western political imaginings lends weight to calls for political geography to embrace ethnographic methods, can be instrumental in blurring disciplinary boundaries and provides an 'invitation to an ethically sensitive evaluation of future possibilities' (Camilleri and Falk 1992: 252). In thus seeking to re-pluralise our understanding of political space, this examination of a dynamic and innovative polity which is daily enacting sovereign relations, articulating aspects of state-ness, and forging an alternative space for political authority opens up conceptual space for a more 'progressive geopolitics' (Kearns 2008) and a re-evaluation of the political.

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Appendix I: Interviewees

Pseudonym	Occupation	Gender	Political generation/ nationality[166]	Interview date
TGiE Officials				
Lhadon	Secretary, Supreme Justice Commission	M	O	22.03.2006
Tenzin	Chief Election Commissioner	M	O	16.03.2006
Kunchen	Public Service Commissioner	M	B	16.03.2006
Lhundup	Researcher, Audit Commission	M	B	21.03.2007
Themba	Officer, Kashag Secretariat	M	B	15.03.2006
Senge	Chief Planning Officer	M	B	20.03.2006
Choden	Former *Kalon*, Department of Education	F	O	02.12.2006
Jungney	Additional Secretary, Department of Education	M	O	17.03.2006
Ketu	Researcher, Department of Education	M	B	15.03.2007
Dorji	Secretary, Department of Home	M	O	06.11.2007
Yeshi	Additional Secretary, Department of Home	M	B	18.03.2006
Jinpa	Secretary, Department of Health	M	O	21.03.2006
Kusang	Secretary, Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR)	M	O	10.04. 2006 – office 06.11.2007 – café
Loten	Researcher, DIIR	F	B	02.03.2007
Rabten	Representative, Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi	M	O	15.04.2006
Choejor	*Kalon*, Department of Finance & DIIR	M	B	10.04.2006
Lekshay	Additional Secretary, Department of Finance	M	B	02.05.2007
Palkyi	Business Officer, Department of Finance	M	B	10.04.2006
Lobsang	Secretary, Department of Security	M	O	01.05.2007
Dhala	RC Officer, Department of Security	M	B	22.03.2006 01.05.2007
Lhakpa	Data manager, Department of Security	F	B	11.03.2007 - office 05.04.2007 - home
Exile Tibetan Parliamentarians				
Yangchen	Vice-chair, Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPiE)	F	B	29.04.2006

[166] O: 'Older generation' who came to Tibet in the first wave of refugees with or just after the Dalai Lama in 1959
B: 'Born in exile'
N: 'Newcomer refugee' who arrived in India after the mid 1980s
I: Indian

Samphel	*Chitue* in TPiE, Ü-Tsang constituency	M	O	27.02.2006
Dasel	*Chitue* in TPiE, Ü-Tsang constituency. President of National Democratic Party of Tibet	M	O	24.02.2006 11.03.2007
Tsomo	*Chitue* in TPiE, Kham constituency	F	B	29.03.2007 - Dharamsala 13.04.2007 - Delhi
Rabgyal	*Chitue* in TPiE, Amdo constituency. Director, Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre (TPPRC)	M	O	16.03.2006 14.04.2006
Dawa	*Chitue* in TPiE, Sakya constituency	M	O	27.02.2006
Palden	*Chitue* in TPiE, Europe constituency	M	B	06.07.2007
Tseten	*Chitue* candidate in 2006	F	B	17.03.2006

Tibetan NGO officials				
Phegyal	Director, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD)	F	B	25.03.2006
Migyur	Education officer, TCHRD	M	N	25.03.2006
Gonpo	Acting President, Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC)	M	B	17.03.2006
Rigzin	Researcher, Tibetan Women's Association (TWA)	F	O	22.02.2007
Techung	Director, Tesi Environmental Awareness Movement	F	B	13.04.2007
Sonam	Director, Students for a Free Tibet, India	M	B	23.03.2006 03.03.2007
Khedup	Director, Tibetan Multi-education Centre	M	N	27.03.2007
Dhukar	Researcher, International Campaign for Tibet [based in Dharamsala]	M	N	13.03.2007
Dugtak	Vice-president, Ngari Chiltrum Association	M	B	21.03.2007
Hortsang	President, Darjeeling branch of Ü-Tsang association [interviewed in Dharamsala]	M	O	06.04.2007
Bhutuk	Assistant Director, Tibetan Chamber of Commerce	M	B	12.11.2007

Tibetan Press				
Gedhup	Editor, TibeToday magazine [interviewed in Dharamsala]	M	N	22.03.2007
Nyidon	Editor, Contact magazine [interviewed in Dharamsala]	M	O	02.05.2007 03.11.2007
Bhuchung	Editor, Voice of Tibet [interviewed in Dharamsala]	M	O	26.02.2006
Taklha	Editor, Tibetan Review [interviewed in Delhi]	M	O	13.03.2006 11.11.2007
Chenga	Reporter, Phayul.com [interviewed in Delhi]	M	B	08.03.2006
Phurkyi	Producer, Bhod Gyalo [monthly news video, interviewed in Delhi]	F	N	12.11.2007

Dharamsala				
Shamba	Welfare Officer, Dharamsala	M	O	04.04.2007
Norzin	Indo-Tibetan co-ordinator, Dharamsala Welfare Office	M	B	10.03.2006 20.04.2007
Yangzom	Local Assembly member, Dharamsala	F	B	06.04.2007
Phakpa	Director, Refugee Reception Centre	M	O	05.04.2007

Narendra	District Commissioner, Kangra	M	I	07.11.2007
Yonten	Political activist & former Tibetan resistance fighter	M	O	19.02.2006
Togden	Teacher, Yongling day school	F	O	18.03.2006
Rinchen	Café owner	F	O	15.03.2007
Tendar	Housewife	F	O	18.03.2006
Legdup	Teacher, Dolma-ling Nunnery	F	O	04.11.2007
Ngawang	Writer and political activist	M	B	18.03.2006 14.03.2007
Dechen	College graduate	F	B	01.04.2007 19.04.2007
Dolma	Restaurant owner	F	B	08.03.2007 23.10.2007
Damdul	Teacher, Upper Tibetan Children's Village (TCV)	M	B	23.10.2007
Tsultrim	Amateur film maker	M	B	09.03.2006 03.03.2007
Gelek	Waitress	F	B	08.03.2007 16.04.2007
Namdrol	Student, Upper TCV	M	B	31.03.2007
Nyendak	Law graduate, doing freelance work for Dharamsala based NGOs	M	B	05.03.2006 24.03.2007
Gadong	Monk, Kirti monastery, Dharamsala	M	N	18.03.2006
Sherab	Monk, Namgyal monastery, Dharamsala	M	N	02.05.2007
Thinley	Monk studying English in Dharamsala	M	N	14.03.2007
Dekit	Nun, Ganden Choeling nunnery	F	N	12.03.2006
Thubten	Student at Tibetan Transit School	F	N	20.02.2007
Tempa	Unemployed, volunteering at community café	M	N	23.03.2007
Ugyen	Unemployed	M	N	31.03.2007
Gonpo	Former political prisoner, unemployed	F	N	12.03.2007
Pema	Thanka painter	M	N	21.03.2006 29.10.2007
Wangchuk	Writer and publisher	M	N	17.03.2007 16.04.2007
Deepak	Former TCV teacher	M	I	28.10.2007
Satish	Landowner in Lahaul, visiting Dharamsala	M	I	05.11.2007
Bhupen	Businessman	M	I	05.11.2007
Kaushik	Legal advocate	M	I	14.03.2007
Madhu	Reporter for IBN-CNN	F	I	18.03.2006
Cherring	Director of Spiti education project	M	I	04.04.2007

Majnuka Tilla Tibetan Colony, North Delhi				
Lakpa	Secretary, Majnuka Tilla Welfare Office	M	B	16.04.2006 04.06.2007
Jagdeep	Headmaster, Samyeling Tibetan day school	M	I	06.06.2007
Khandro	Nurse, Majnuka Tilla Clinic	F	B	05.06.2007
Wangdak	Secretary, Majnuka Tilla Residents Association	F	O	07.06.2007
Jampa	Shopkeeper	M	O	05.06.2007

Thupten	Social worker	M	B	05.06.2007
Tsering	Hotel owner and businessman	M	B	16.04.2006 11.03.2007
Gyatso	Activist and casual labourer	M	B	10.11.2007
Chimi	Politics graduate, unemployed	F	B	07.06.2007
Passang	Sweater seller	M	N	02.03.2007
Tsewang	Receptionist	F	N	15.04.2006
Dhargyal	Trader	F	N	07.06.2007

South Delhi				
Karchung	Careers counsellor, Youth Opportunity Trust Asia	M	B	01.03.2007
Topgyal	Website designer	M	B	30.10.2007
Gyurme	Youth worker	F	N	13.04.2007
Lalita	Student, Delhi University	F	I	10.04.2007
Sunita	Member of 'Friends of Tibet, Delhi'	F	I	10.04.2007 24.10.2007
Manoj	Freelance journalist	M	I	11.11.2007
Anoop	Newspaper journalist	M	I	13.04.2007
Vijay	Former Indian-Tibetan liaison officer	M	I	04.06.2007
Gopal	Former Official, Ministry of Rehabilitation	M	I	05.06.2007
Tejal	Advocate, Human Rights Law Network	F	I	05.06.2007

Dekyiling settlement and surrounding Tibetan institutions, Dehradun				
Dhargey	Chief Representative, Uttarakhand Region	M	O	18.04.2007
Gyalwa	Settlement Officer, Dekyiling	M	O	18.04.2007
Jetsan	Accountant, Dekyiling Settlement Office	F	B	16.04.2007
Kalden	General Manger, Rajpur Handicraft Centre	M	B	24.04.2007
Zopa	Headmaster, Tibetan Homes Foundation (THF)school, Mussoorie	M	O	20.04.2007
Norgay	Retired TGiE official, Dekyiling	M	O	17.04.2007
Chungtak	Guest house owner, and former *Gyabon*, Dekyiling	M	O	17.04.2007
Dhamchoe	Teacher, Sambhota school, Dekyiling	F	B	18.04.2007
Tashi	Taxi driver, Dekyiling	M	B	18.04.2007
Samdup	Librarian, Dekyiling	M	B	19.04.2007
Kawa	Hairdresser, Dekyiling	F	B	19.04.2007
Kesang	President, TWA Dekyiling	F	B	19.04.2007
Tseyang	Teacher, Ngoenga school for handicapped children	F	B	18.04.2007
Pemba	Teacher, TCV Vocational Training College, Selaqui	M	B	16.04.2007
Youngdrung	THF student	F	N	19.04.2007
Preeti	Housewife, living next to Dekyiling settlement	F	I	25.04.2007

Clementown Settlement, Dehradun				
Sangye	Vice President, Clementown Settlement Society	M	O	25.04.2007

Tara	Khandro Rimpoche, Mindrolling Monastery	F	B	20.04.2007
Jingme	Retired monastery secretary	M	O	20.04.2007
Kalsang	Shopkeeper	F	B	22.04.2007
Ngodup	Sweater seller and café owner	F	B	19.04.2007
Lhanze	Student and captain of settlement football team	M	B	16.04.2007

Sonamling Settlement, Ladakh				
Jamyang	Chief Representative, Ladakh Region	M	O	25.05.2007
Metok	Principal, TCV Sonamling	M	O	21.05.2007
Chonpel	*Gyabon*, Camp 11	M	O	24.05.2007
Riga	Teacher, TCV Sonamling	M	O	21.05.2007
Thokmey	Farmer, Camp 6	F	O	28.05.2007
Sangpo	Taxi driver and shopkeeper, Camp 4	M	B	23.05.2007
Kunga	Casual labourer, Camp 7	M	B	18.05.2007
Woser	Farmer and casual labourer, Camp 4	M	B	20.05.2007
Khenpo	Teacher, Lamdon school, Leh	F	B	18.05.2007
Penpa	President, Tibetan Market Association Leh	M	N	19.05.2007
Phuntsok	Ladakhi NGO worker	F	I	16.05.2007

Lugsum-Samdupling Settlement, Bylakuppe, Karnataka				
Karma	Secretary, Lugsum-Samdupling Settlement Office	F	B	28.11.2007
Namsel	Agricultural Officer, Lugsum-Samdupling Settlement Office	M	B	27.11.2007
Gyaltsen	President, Lugsum-Samdupling Co-operative	M	O	28.11.2007
Chokyi	Accountant, Lugsum-Samdupling Co-operative	M	B	28.11.2007
Devesh	Assistant to Superintendent of Police, Priyapatna	M	I	25.11.2007
Thakchoe	Farmer and sweater seller, Camp 13	M	O	16.11.2007
Osel	Farmer, Camp 7	F	O	26.11.2007
Tsepak	*Thanka* painter, Camp 2	M	O	25.11.2007
Tharchin	Student, Central School for Tibetans Bylakuppe, Camp 4	M	B	19.11.2007
Norzom	Student in Mangalore, staying with family, Camp 13	M	B	18.11.2007 25.11.2007
Dolkar	Housewife, Camp 5	F	B	18.11.2007
Wangdue	Teacher, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery	M	B	15.11.2007
Dhondup	Monk at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery	M	N	15.11.2007
Wangyal	Monk at Sera Me Monastery	M	N	20.11.2007

Bangalore				
Lekshey	Secretary, Chief Representative Office, Bangalore	M	B	29.11.2007
Bhutit	Director, TCV hostel Bangalore	F	O	10.12.2007

Choeying	IT consultant	F	B	03.12.2007
Choezum	College student	F	N	28.10.2007
Migmar	College student	M	N	04.12.2007
Rohit	Lawyer, Alternative Law Forum	M	I	06.12.2007

Tibetans in the UK				
Tsundue	Representative of Dalai Lama for North Europe	M	O	16.09.2008
Tenchoe	International Tibet Support Network co-ordinator	M	B	06.07.2007
Dhonyoe	Secretary, Tibetan Community in Britain	F	B	11.02.2006
Kunchok	Student	M	N	11.02.2006 24.01.2007

Focus groups			
Location	**Participants**	**Topic of discussion**	**Date**
After meeting of *Gyalchen Lhenzom*, Dharamsala	5 older men	Future of Tibetan national identity and changes in exile government and community	23.03.2006
Tibetan hostel, Rohini, Delhi	7 university students: 4 male, 3 female	Role of TGiE, education in exile, ideas of refugeehood	30.04.2007

Appendix II: Information sheet for Tibetan citizens

REC Protocol Number QMREC 2006/03

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Sovereignty without territory: The political geographies of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

I would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This study looks at how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile functions, and what kind of Tibetan political community is created outside of Tibet. I will be looking at which welfare services the Tibetan Government-in-Exile provides (e.g. health care, education, employment training) and how these services are delivered and used. I will also be looking at how and why people vote in Tibetan elections, the importance of the Green Book and how Tibetans in India consider their citizenship.

Tibetans living in exile, and over the age of 18 (and therefore able to vote), are being asked to participate in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study you will be interviewed by myself (with a translator if necessary) about these issues. The interview will last 30-90 minutes and will be tape recorded or written down, whichever you are comfortable with. Audio tapes and written transcripts will be kept securely and not made available to any other person.

Your name will not be used in the research. Original data and consent forms will be held by myself only. When finished the research will be presented as a PhD thesis, and reports given to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and Tibetan organisations.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Many thanks

Fiona McConnell
PhD student, Department of Geography
Queen Mary, University of London.

Appendix III: Information sheet for Tibetan officials

REC Protocol Number QMREC 2006/03

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Sovereignty without territory: The political geographies of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

I would like to invite you to participate in this postgraduate research project. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

This study looks at how the Tibetan Government-in-Exile functions, and what kind of Tibetan political community is created outside of Tibet. I will be looking at which welfare services the Tibetan Government-in-Exile provides (e.g. health care, education, employment training) and how these services are delivered and used. I will also be looking at how and why people vote in Tibetan elections, the importance of the Green Book and how Tibetans in India consider their citizenship.

Tibetans living in exile, and over the age of 18 (therefore able to vote), are being asked to participate in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study you will be interviewed by myself (with a translator if necessary) about these issues. The interview will last 30-90 minutes and will be tape recorded or written down, whichever you are comfortable with. Audio tapes and written transcripts will be kept securely and not made available to any other person.

Your name will not be used in the research, but some details about your official position may be included (i.e. the organisation you work for, and in some cases the level of authority you hold). Therefore complete anonymity cannot be assured.

Original data and consent forms will be held by myself only. When finished the research will be presented as a PhD thesis, and reports given to the Tibetan Government-in-Exile and Tibetan organisations.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

Many thanks

Fiona McConnell
PhD student, Department of Geography
Queen Mary, University of London.

Appendix IV: Consent form

REC Protocol Number QMREC 2006/03

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study*: Sovereignty without territory: The political geographies of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile.*

Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee Ref: _____

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time.

I consent to the storing of basic personal information (name, residence, occupation, age) for the purposes of this research study.

Participant's Statement:
I _____ agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involved.

Signed: Date:

Investigator's Statement:
I _____ confirm that I have carefully explained the nature of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed: Date: